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# THE MUSIC REVIEW

May 1954

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# THE MUSIC REVIEW

Edited by GEOFFREY SHARP

VOL. XV, NO. 2

MAY, 1954

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## Rossini's Barber of Seville and its Overture

BY

VITTORIO GUI

ON 20th February, 1816, at the Teatro Argentina in Rome, Rossini's *Barber of Seville* had its *première*. The overture which preceded the opera had not been specially composed for *The Barber*. It had originally been written for *Aureliano in Palmira*, produced two years earlier, on 26th December, 1813, at La Scala, Milan. This opera was a failure. In October, 1815, another Rossini opera was presented at the San Carlo Theatre, Naples. For this piece, entitled *Elizabeth of England*, the composer, whose notorious laziness was equalled only by the haste with which he committed his music to paper, brought the *Aureliano* Overture back into service. This he did a second time when *The Barber* was staged in 1815. In brief, that is the history of the famous Overture. Not in the least surprising, when one remembers that at that time the orchestral prelude known as *Sinfonia*, which opened the performance (hence "*ouverture*" used both in German and French musical terminology) bore no relation to the content and sometimes not even to the character of the opera which followed. *La Cenerentola* was something of an exception, inasmuch as Rossini introduced into the brilliant overture a theme from the finale to the first act. Finally at the height of his artistic development, Rossini made the *William Tell* overture a real introduction to the opera and a true symphonic poem. But the aesthetic concepts which informed his later works had no place in the mind of the composer as a young man. No wonder then that he used the same overture for three different operas! It is now known that the manuscript of *Aureliano in Palmira* has been lost, but there is in existence at Pesaro the complete manuscript of *Elizabeth* with the overture which, on the face of it, should be identical with the one used for *The Barber*. How is it then that the original Pesaro manuscript differs in detail from the version generally played at normal performances of *The Barber*? Who was responsible for the variants which are neither few nor insignificant? And why were they made?

Like other Italian musicians who have studied the question, I consider that the Pesaro manuscript is the version to be followed. For this reason. It is more than likely that Rossini gave instructions for the overture to be used for *The Barber* without making changes in the score. His proverbial laziness would seem adequate grounds for this assumption. Moreover, it would have been logical to note the modifications on the *Elizabeth* manuscript, which, however, bears no trace of corrections. Another cogent argument that the manuscript of the *Elizabeth* Overture is the same as that of the first draft—the *Aureliano* Overture—is provided by the fact that the quality of the paper used for the Overture and the Opera itself is different. Rossini says quite clearly in a letter—"I have introduced *The Barber* with the *Elizabeth* Overture"—which proves that its form was unchanged for both operas. What, then,

is the origin of the variants, some of which I now propose to discuss and illustrate? I should say either copyists' carelessness or the technical limitations of certain executants. It should also be remembered that at that time there was no such thing as sacrosanct respect for original composition. Ricordi, in the first edition of *The Barber*, published the Overture just as it was in the Pesaro manuscript—the same as the *Elizabeth* version. It was only later that different versions began to circulate around the world. In my opinion, the alterations are absolutely arbitrary. Artistic evaluation of the changes (as you will see in the examples I quote) only serves to bear out my thesis that between the manuscript version and the one normally in use, the choice should be self-evident. Comparing the two versions, we straightway find a discrepancy in the melody in the fourth bar:



Immediately afterwards, at the sixth, seventh and eighth bars, the two versions differ in the harmony accompanying the oboe melody:

(Oboe)

Orig. vers. 

Usual vers. 

At the tenth bar where the first violins take up their melody the normal reading is as follows:



where the *appoggiatura* is wrongly prolonged to double its value, while the original reads:



The same figure is symmetrically repeated in the following bar. Shortly afterwards we find the violins playing as follows in the usual reading:



In the original the figure is different:



Then we come to the controversial bars, the last six before the *Allegro*, with the famous "false relationship" of G natural with G sharp, which perhaps sounded odd to Rossini's contemporaries, but which Rossini had daringly used, perfectly sure of what he wanted



with a blithe G natural for the violas modulating to G sharp two notes later.

What is interesting is that the anonymous reviser, not having the courage to accept Rossini's bold harmony, thought to solve the problem by a sort of musical judgment of Solomon, like this:



so abolishing the G natural.

Now to the famous *Allegro*. There is no doubt that Rossini repeated the same violin figure three times:



while usually the figure is modified in the first repetition, thus:



To be fair, we must admit that the variant, whether it be accidental or intentional, adds a little variety to the movement and, although the reading is arbitrary, I should be loath to reject it. Once in a while tradition has had the better of authenticity. I hope that Rossini will smile understandingly at me from the Elysian Fields and that he will bear me no grudge.

Do you remember the joke he played on some of his over-zealous friends, when the question arose of that note in the cor anglais passage from the *William Tell* Overture? B or A? Rossini with his usual lively sense of irony,

and not treating the matter too seriously, wrote to his friend Maestro Arditi on a visiting card:



adding these decisive words—*A* not *B*! But a few days later he wrote to Giulio Ricordi, stating that it should be *B* and not *A*. Perhaps the question of *Aureliano in Palmira*, *Elizabeth*, and *The Barber* is a case in the same category.

There are many other examples I could quote, but these must suffice. I leave them with you in the hope that some musician may feel inclined to pursue the comparison of the two versions of this wonderfully sparkling piece of music. For the Glyndebourne production of the opera which I am preparing, I shall keep strictly to the edition of the vocal score revised with reference to the original (the manuscript of the whole Opera apart from the Overture is in Bologna) by Maestro Maffeo Zanon and published by Ricordi in 1942, the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Rossini's birth. It was in that year that I directed performances most faithful to the original at the Florentine Musical May Festival. Of all the older editions of *The Barber* full score, it seems that the least inaccurate is one published in a small study format by Guidi, Florence. I also have another, oblong in shape, a much earlier edition published by Ratti and Cencetti in Rome at the beginning of the last century, perhaps immediately after the first performance. But it is full of errors. Though, as is known, Rossini dashed off his operas in a very short time, an examination of his manuscripts shows that he took the greatest pains to ensure accuracy. No, the inaccurate ones were the copyists, the publishers, the arrangers. Another Rossini opera of the same period, a masterpiece ranking with *The Barber* and *Cenerentola*—I refer to *L'Italiana in Algeri*—still turns up in editions crammed with mistakes.

In conclusion, to return to the question of the two versions of the Overture to *The Barber*, when Ricordi next bring out a new edition of the full score, they might well include the two readings, side by side, so as to afford students an opportunity of detailed comparison. For it is a fascinating page in which the eternal laughter of the great Italian still re-echoes with the same vivacity after a hundred and thirty years.

(Translated by Gwyn Morris.)



## *Some unpublished Schubert songs and song fragments*

BY

MAURICE J. E. BROWN

CONFRONTED by the enormous number of Schubert songs which *are* published, and of which only a small fraction is known by the musical public, it may seem superfluous to try and introduce still more of the composer's songs, particularly as they are, in the first place, not accessible in print, and, in the second, largely unperformable. But it is precisely the last two facts which have prompted the writing of this article: none of the ten pieces listed below is likely to appear in any singer's programme, nor for years to come, possibly, in print, and yet each one has some point of interest, either of form, or of content, or, where the sketches are concerned, as giving us a glimpse into Schubert's "workshop"—a hint as to the manner in which that wonderful and intangible fusion of melody and accompaniment was born in his mind. One recalls in this connection some words of Mendelssohn's. After he had produced Schubert's great Symphony in C major at Leipzig, in 1839, he received from Ferdinand Schubert, the composer's brother, the gift of Schubert's sketches for a Symphony in E, composed in August, 1821. It was a gift inspired by Ferdinand's gratitude for the Leipzig performance. In a glowing letter of thanks Mendelssohn wrote:

"Indeed it seems to me as if, at once, by the very incompleteness of the work, by reason of the jottings here and there in the manuscript, I became personally acquainted with your brother, more exactly and more intimately than I could have done from a completed work. It was as if I saw him there, working in his room. . .".

It is exactly how one feels with the sketches of works by the great composers, and particularly with those of Schubert, when he is rushing down on to paper, as quickly as he can write, the thoughts which are clamouring to be embodied. There is, and it should be faced, a danger here. Genius is an age-old puzzle, and the works which manifest it, exerting a perennial fascination, at the same time pose an eternal problem. What mysterious essence is in them, which gives them life, when the works of other men, indistinguishable in externals, perish with their generation? "How tiresome is the Mozart idiom" wrote Eric Blom recently, "without Mozart behind it". Feeling that we are brought closer to an understanding of the mystery by the first, unpolished outpourings of genius, we may, if not carefully on our guard, end by finding a sketched composition of more interest than a finished fair-copy. The musicologist in us stifles the musician. With such a precaution in mind, this study of ten unpublished pieces by Schubert has been written.

They are here given in three groups. The bracketed number after each one is from Deutsch's Schubert thematic catalogue.

- I. (i) *Meeresstille*, words by Goethe (216).
- (ii) *Am ersten Maimorgen*, words by Claudius (344).
- (iii) *Mailed*, words by Hölty (503).
- (iv) *Klage* ("Nimmer länger trag'ich"), words by an unknown poet (512).

- II. (i) *An Chloen*, words by Uz (363).
- (ii) *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*, words by Schiller (396).
- III. (i) "*Ich sass an einer Tempelhalle*", words by an unknown poet (39).
- (ii) *Lorma*, words by "Ossian" (327).
- (iii) "*O Quell, was strömost du . . . ?*", words by Schulze (663).
- (iv) *Fröhliches Scheiden*, words by Leitner (896).

The first six songs were completed by Schubert; the four in the first group are preserved complete, but the two in the second group have come down to us in an incomplete form. The four songs in the last group were not finished by the composer: the first two are complete as far as they go, the last two are sketches only.

The final song in the above list, *Fröhliches Scheiden*, was reproduced in facsimile in Richard Heuberger's book *Franz Schubert* (Berlin, 1902); in that sense it is not exactly unpublished. But the author has little to say of the song-sketch, which is full of interest, and since his book is, undeservedly, so little known, I felt justified in including it in the above ten unpublished songs.

It will be seen that all the authors mentioned above are familiar names in the long series of Schubert's poets. The ten song-manuscripts are scattered all over the world, in America, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Austria, France and England, in libraries and in private possession: relevant facts will be given in connection with the individual discussion of each piece.

#### I. (i) *Meeresstille* (Goethe).

The manuscript of this song is privately owned; it was written on the day before the second, and celebrated setting of the poem, published as the composer's op. 3, no. 2. On the other side of the page bearing this first setting of *Meeresstille* is another song—Goethe's *Jägers Abendlied*; this is also a first setting, with a more famous setting written several months later (op. 3, no. 4). Both the first setting of *Jägers Abendlied* and of *Meeresstille* were composed on the same day—20th June, 1815. They were unknown at the time of the publication of the *Gesamtausgabe* of Schubert's works, and neither appears in the song-volumes of that edition (1894). But the editor of those volumes, Eusebius Mandyczewski, encountered them in later years, and he published *Jägers Abendlied* in January, 1907, in *Die Musik*, Berlin. The reason that he refrained from publishing *Meeresstille*, at the same time, is that the last five bars are missing from the manuscript page. They have been found on another Schubert song-manuscript—*Cronnan* (words by "Ossian"), written in September, 1815. It is more than likely that another reason for Mandyczewski's withholding the publication of the song is the superficial resemblance of this unknown *Meeresstille* to its successor in op. 3, no. 2. In both his settings of Goethe's poem on the becalmed sailor, Schubert uses slow, semibreve chords in the accompaniment, and at first glance one might be forgiven for assuming that the earlier setting is a sketch—and only that—for the later one. But closer acquaintance reveals all kinds of radical differences and no other first draft of a Schubert song shows such marked variants from the finished work as is found between these two settings. They must be regarded as independent.



There are, naturally, links between the two songs, since it would be idle to deny that the earlier setting is, in a sense, Schubert's preparation for the later one. He retains the harmony and melody for two epithets in the text, at "fürchterlich" in line 6, and at "ungeheuren" in line 7 of the stanza; both songs end in a similar fashion.

But their independence is more striking than these small resemblances. The earlier setting is the grander, more rugged conception, highly chromatic and without any touches of tenderness such as we have in the second setting at the words "Todesstille" and "Weite". The powerful sequence at "und bekümmert sieht der Schiffer . . ." gives an indication of the quality of the music:—

Ex. 1

...und be - küm-mert sieht der Schif-fer glat - te Flä-sche rings um - her.

The sequence quoted has a remarkable likeness to the passage in the song *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* of September, 1817 (op. 24, no. 1), at the words: "Verzweiflung sperret ihren Rachen fluchend auf".

Schubert's aim was clearly to refine and polish his original conception when he returned to the poem the next day. Both settings are in C major, but, whereas the first shifts almost at once into E major, the second moves more slowly and smoothly into the new key, taking twice as many bars to do so. A more melodious setting of the words quoted above, leading into the subdominant, replaces the excited sequences of Ex. 1. He dispenses with harsh passing notes on "Weite" and substitutes a soft E major chord. His two treatments of the words "Keine Luft von keine Seite", placed side by side, are also of great interest.

Singers will prefer the second setting; but no Schubertian would give it pride of place.

- I. (ii) *Am ersten Maimorgen* (Claudius).
- (iii) *Mailed* (Hölty).
- (iv) *Klage* (Anon.).

These three songs were composed by Schubert for Therese Grob, the soprano soloist in the first performance of his Mass in F major (1814). This we know by reason of the fact that they are included in a collection of autograph songs by Schubert known as "Therese Grob's Album". Her charm lay solely in her voice, which must have been, by all accounts, of rare lyric quality; Schubert, on negligible evidence, is supposed to have been in love with her. Her "Album" containing the manuscripts of these three unpublished songs is in the possession

of the Meangya family, of Mödling, Vienna; they are descendants of Therese's brother Heinrich. For some reason they refuse to allow the songs to be published. If this is due to an impression that they are harbouring treasures of untold worth then that impression is a false one; these three songs are of no more than secondary interest. If, on the other hand, they fear that publication would damage Schubert's reputation, they are being over-cautious, for the songs are all charming examples of Schubert's lesser levels of work.

The first one, *Am ersten Maimorgen*, with the "fröhlich, fröhlich" of its first line, is an embodiment of the poet's high spirits evoked by May-day, and the coming of Spring. Claudius' poem is a notable example of the first stirrings of the remarkable lyrical efflorescence in German literature at the end of the eighteenth century. It is almost a bacchanale; the thought of Spring is intoxicating. "My thyrsus" says the poet, "be a budding wand, and I will reel towards my friend, the Spring".

Schubert writes a joyful G major melody for the buoyant words. It is a type of melody which has, erroneously in my view, been attributed to the influence of folk-song in Schubert's art. Those who rank folk-song as one of the significant contributions to the genesis of the Schubert song cannot have explored very thoroughly the realm of pre-Schubertian Austrian folk-song. The shapeliness, the vivacity, one might add the *sophistication*, of Schubert's secondary strophic songs are as far apart from preceding folk-song as is *You Like It from Gammer Gurton's Needle*.

#### Ex. 2



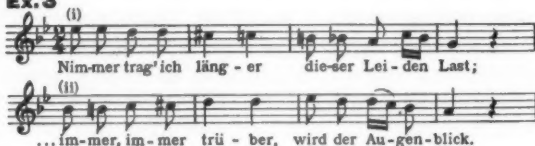
The song was written in 1816, when Schubert's relationship with the Grob family was at its most intimate.

The second of the three songs, *Mailed*, was composed in November, 1816. The words are by a favourite poet of Schubert's, Hölty, whose small lyric forms held a great attraction for the composer in his youth. This particular poem had been composed by Schubert as a duet a year or so previously, and as a male-voice trio even earlier. The unpublished solo song of 1816 is very much better than either of the part-songs: it is in a graceful, 6/8 movement, in G major, and affords one more example, among hundreds, of the type of Schubert song which reaches up, as the composer warms to his work, from a moderately interesting beginning to an inspired and poetic music. In this connection it is interesting to observe that Schubert's postludes are nearly always of greater significance and worth than his preludes, if, indeed, he bothers to write a prelude; and it is only very rarely that he, unlike later song composers, makes the same music do for both. *Mailed* gathers in all manner of pretty details as it goes along, until the plain *arpeggio* figures of the opening bars sparkle with small

embellishments, and finally the music is as full of blossom as the month it is exalting.

The third song *Klage*, to words by an unknown poet, has the deepest, or, at least, the saddest, feeling of the three. It was composed early in 1817. Schubert was fond of the poem (which is wrongly attributed to Hölty in some Schubert editions) and two other solo settings of it had been composed in May, 1815. These are published. Although neither of the 1815 songs is ever sung publicly, the second of them is known to everyone because Schubert used its melody in one of the subsidiary sections of the B flat *entr'acte* from *Rosamunde*. The third, unpublished, setting of the words is, technically, an exercise in chromaticism, redeemed by the genuine emotion of the melody:

**Ex. 3**



**II. (i) *An Chloen* (Uz).**

This song survives as a fragment, and a grievous one at that. It was composed by Schubert, complete, in 1816. At some time during the nineteenth century it came into the possession of the composer's half-brother, Andreas (1823-93). This wretched man, though prompted by good intentions, was in the habit of scissoring his famous half-brother's autographs and distributing the fragments, as interesting relics, to Schubert lovers. The best known example of this dismemberment is that of the autograph of "*Der Tod und das Mädchen*", which he cut up into eleven pieces, of which eight have been recovered. While it is not so serious where published, or copied, works are concerned, it becomes exasperating in the case of songs, like *An Chloen*, of which no other copy exists. Andreas Schubert cut off the top of the manuscript page to present someone (unknown) with Schubert's signature: in doing so he quite unnecessarily cut away with it the voice part and the treble part of the pianoforte accompaniment. The first five bars (the song is twenty-three bars long) are represented solely by the bass stave of the pianoforte part. The relic is now in the possession of Konsul Otto Taussig of Malmö, Sweden, who has made unavailing efforts to find the missing heading.

The music has the grave, attractive quality of its contemporary *An den Mond* ("*Geuss, lieber Mond*") to words by Hölty. *An Chloen* is a poem in four stanzas, and Schubert's repeat marks show that more than the first one is to be sung, but he has not indicated how many. There is no prelude (this is deducible from the remaining music), but an extensive postlude (eight bars). Undoubtedly, had the song been preserved intact, it would have achieved a slightly larger renown than its numerous fellow strophic songs from that very fruitful year. It would have ranked with *Gott im Frühlinge* as the best of Schubert's solo songs to words by the poet Uz. It is tempting to assess the

missing music from the remains of it, especially as the preserved left-hand stave of the first line shows a bass of more individuality than is usual in this type of song. But there is no help from any "recapitulation" towards the end.<sup>1</sup> Those readers who possess the Deutsch thematic catalogue of Schubert's works may care to correct the small semiquaver figure quoted there: the first note is E natural, not E flat.

## II. (ii) *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* (Schiller).

If one regrets the mutilation of *An Chloen*, one might feel more than regret at the condition of this first setting by Schubert of Schiller's *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*. This also was completed by Schubert, composed during March, 1816, a month which saw the birth of many songs, none of which has found its way into the singers' repertoire. Assuredly this one would have done so. At the bottom of the page where the words "Schmerz verzerret . . ." are reached, the movement changes, showing that the song was "durchkomponiert". The autograph was sold to a publisher by Ferdinand Schubert, whose initials and paraph appear at the top of the page below the title. The publisher (no well known one) intended to publish it: his number D.26814 is written at the bottom of the page. Unhappily, this first page, of fourteen bars, is all that survives—the rest has been lost. The fragment is in the possession of the Newberry Library, Chicago.

Judging from the first page the song would not have been considered a secondary one, of some importance, but as one of the masterpieces of 1816. Challenged by the supreme setting of the same words in September, 1817, it would yet have held its own.

Since it has never been quoted in any way, the opening bars are given below: they indicate the style and passionate quality of the music, a quality which intensifies as the movement proceeds.

Ex. 4 Mächtig

Horch, wie Mur - meln des em-pör-ten Mee - res...

Cresc.

## III. (i) "*Ich sass an einer Tempelhalle*" (Anon.).

The manuscript of this unfinished song is in the Library of the Conservatoire de Paris, being part of the bequest of the collector Charles Malherbe. It has no title, no date, and no signature. The words (in German) "Fragment of a song by Franz Schubert", by another hand, appear at the top of the page. The

<sup>1</sup> There is a pleasant and convincing opening in existence, devised by one (?) Rheinhold, in 1928.

piece consists of two pages of manuscript, but Schubert (the handwriting is unquestionably his, and the manuscript was so certified by Mandyczewski in 1893) has written in the words of the first two lines only, and since the poet is unknown the rest of the music will never be fitted to its generating text. The style of the song, both of the music and the handwriting, would suggest a slightly earlier date than the alleged one—1813. It is quite different from the other unpublished song fragments, being no swift and sure conception in the composer's mind, but a piecemeal setting of the words as they came.

It opens with a passage in C major, 2/4 time, *Andante*, using tremolo bass octaves and broken chords in the right hand in the manner of scores of his early songs, but containing a very early example of a Schubertian device that persisted throughout his work to the very last, namely, the bass progression which subsides through a major third, C, B flat, A flat, carrying the music to remote flat keys before a return to the tonic: the progression is marked, also characteristically, *ppp*. A two-bar *Recitativo (Adagio)* leads to *tempo* I. The key changes which follow are extraordinary in so early a work: from C major to B flat major, to B major to a *Presto* in F minor. One could, judging the piece generously, call them audacious for the period, but they are, in fact, the result of an uncontrolled excitement over the words, an excitement which one cannot share, in their absence. The song breaks off with an *Andante* in D major.

The fragment has much in common with the published song *Eine Leichenphantasie* which Schubert had composed a short time previously.

### III. (ii) *Lorma* ("Ossian").

Schubert, in his youth, was irresistibly attracted by the misty, Romantic atmosphere of the "Ossian" poems, where local colour is neither colourful nor generic: crude "halls" are lit by flaming oak-logs, night always seems to be coming down and the moon going up, winds breathe with ghostly voice and whisper over mountain and heath, youths are out very late hunting stags while their maidens, pale and wistful, usually exiled from island homes, wait for their return, or they are departing for the "wars", or coming back from them, and bloody "battles, long ago" haunt the pathways and valleys, warrior ghosts stride the air, and mysterious lights flash over the seaways. It is all a little pretentious and devitalized, and one never feels very interested in the legendary figures which populate ("people" is too strong a word) the poems, at least, in so far as one meets them in Schubert's settings. These are plainly derivatives from the song-forms of Zumsteeg (who also set "Ossian"), which Schubert took over as a boy, and which, in most of the "Ossian" songs he never abandoned. Declamation is intermingled with more formal, measured movements, and this mosaic structure quite defeats the rambling narrative of the verses. Instead of giving them point and direction, of mastering the wayward course of the story, it brings it almost to a standstill, and we lose interest in both words and music before the song is over. The last "Ossian" songs were composed when Schubert was nineteen—after that the poet's attraction for him fortunately vanished.



Although on the whole the longer "Ossian" songs are failures, not one of them is, of course, without its page, or pages of interest, and all have some point or other of note. One of these is the style of *recitativo* which Schubert uses in them, a style which was not without influence on the "recitatives" of his later operas. His method was to devise a short and significant pianoforte figure, rather like a *leitmotiv*, and use it as an interludial link between the sentences of his "recitative"; with each appearance it undergoes various changes of form and key, with the result that the succeeding phrases of the "recitative" take on the freshness of a new viewpoint.

The words of *Lorma* come from "Ossian's" *Battle of Lora*, and were translated into German by Edmund, Baron de Harold. Schubert set the words twice; the first, unpublished setting on 28th November, 1815, the second, published in the *Gesamtausgabe*, in February, 1816. He completed neither of these, which probably indicates his lack of sustained interest in the poem. The earlier song-fragment gives an interesting account of Schubert's method with these "Ossianic" *recitativo* passages. The song opens in A minor, 3/4, *Langsam*, with a pathetic, two-bar phrase, like a sigh: it typifies the girl, Lorma, waiting forlornly for the return of her lover, Aldo. The picture is described in a series of declamatory phrases. Between them the two-bar phrase undergoes delicate transformations which paint the scene for us—nightfall, the firelit hall, the troubled mind of the waiting girl:



When she begins to utter her thoughts in words the music moves into G minor, *alla breve*, with a more formal lyricism. At the end of her monologue the song breaks off on a *recitativo* in C major.

- III. (iii) "O Quell, was strömst du . . .?" (Schulze).  
 (iv) *Fröhliches Scheiden* (Leitner).

These two unfinished sketches of songs belong to Schubert's last years, the first being composed in January, 1826, the second in 1827. They have thus the promise of mature utterance, and were conceived during a period when, as Richard Capell has said, "hardly a line he wrote is negligible". Both the poets are typical of the respective years.

It is a remarkable aspect of Schubert's songs that where there is a well-defined group of settings by one poet, a poet of secondary importance in literature but with a definite flavour of his own, then Schubert's settings of his poems have unmistakable musical traits in common—a style *sui generis* for that particular group. It may partly be due to the fact that the songs of these groups are close neighbours in time, but only partly. It is, moreover, true

only of secondary poets—Heine, Hölty, Müller, and of the even lesser men such as Mayrhofer, Leitner, Rellstab and so on; Schubert's range in Goethe and Schiller is as wide as their own. But it is nowhere more obvious than in the group by Ernst Schulze. This young poet (he was twenty-eight when he died) evoked an urgency, a passionate earnestness, an "onrunning" style of writing in Schubert, producing songs which are related individuals and unlike groups of songs by other poets, even when those groups were written in the same period of time. The "Schulze" accompaniments, in particular, are notable for the unflagging use of pianistic figures (*Über Wildemann, Auf der Bruck, An mein Herz, etc.*) which proceed from beginning to end of the song without truce.

Schulze's young life was clouded by the tragic death of a woman with whom he was deeply in love. Those poems of his, which Schubert set, and which are taken from a "Poetic Diary", reflect this obsessional and unhappy love. The words of the poem "*O Quell, was strömt du rasch und wild?*" for which Schubert sketched a song are a dialogue between a flower and a spring. In characteristic allegorical fashion Schulze intends the flower to symbolize "Love" and the spring "Life". Schubert's manuscript sketch, which is a first writing down, is in the possession of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It is written on the back of another Schulze setting, *Tiefes Leid*: hence the assumed date of composition. It reveals Schubert's method—or one of his methods—with the setting of words. The melody has been conceived: it is written out complete for the first stanza. The piano-motiv, which is to be the basis of his accompaniment, has taken shape and is fully shown in the four-bar prelude—it is a "rippling" figure inspired by the thought of the bubbling spring; its subsequent and various harmonic forms are easy to deduce from the melody. A modulatory link in one bar is in Schubert's mind, and the outline jotted down quickly as he proceeds with his melody. It would have been a characteristic song, and one to cherish, if not of the same intensity as the other Schulze songs. Is it any use seeking for the reason why Schubert left it unfinished? In so far as the reason is a musical one we may perhaps imagine Schubert faced with this problem: the first stanza, sung by the "flower", is accompanied by a "water" motiv; what is he to do with the next stanza, sung by the "spring"? Is the "water" motiv to persist? Would it be better to reserve this motiv for the second stanza, and recast the accompaniment for the "flower's" questions? At that point, if the surmise be correct, we see Schubert laying the song aside—and not returning to it.

Karl von Leitner's poem *Fröhliches Scheiden* is the complacent utterance of a young man who finds to his surprise that leaving his sweetheart is a happy affair—because she wept over him at parting! He cannot keep his feelings to himself and shouts it aloud to the moonlit lakes and hills. His lady's tears over his leave-taking form the refrain of each of the four verses. In the last of these the lover contemplates death in foreign lands without dread, because then, evidently, she will weep even more bitterly.

Schubert's sketch, in the possession of the Vienna Stadtbibliothek, is for his "modified strophic" type of song. His method is the same as with the

previously discussed work. The melody, with words subjoined, is completely written out. Small pianoforte interludes, typical Schubertian "echo-phrases", are indicated throughout. These reinforce the words, or modulate between the verses. Here and there the harmony is indicated by a phrase in the bass. The return of the opening melody and tonic key for the last stanza has, for a brief passage of 3 bars, the full accompaniment shown: it resembles that of *Lied im Grünen* of the same period. The postlude (there is no prelude) is outlined and the closing double-bars written in. There are one or two rather awkward joins where slight modifications would have been necessary, and the song as it stands is too high for a tenor voice, but only filling in would have been required to complete it. The key-scheme for the four-stanza song is characteristic enough to quote: F major—D flat major—A major—F major.

The music is entirely characteristic of the composer in maturity, apt, melodious and picturesque; the song, if finished, would have been as popular as the aforementioned *Lied im Grünen*. A singer might even have preferred *Fröhliches Scheiden* by reason of the more pointed and personal words, and the changing emphasis on the recurrent refrain—splendidly caught by Schubert—"Sie hat um mich geweint!"

Schubert's sketch for verse 3 is quoted below as he wrote it: it will not only give the reader an idea of the charm of the melody, but will also indicate the nature of the pianoforte interludes.

## Ex. 6

Voice

Ihr Al - pen, See'n und Au - en, Du Mond, der sie be-scheint

Euch will ich mich ver-trau - en, Ihr Al-pen, See'n und Au - en! Sie hat um mich ge-

P.F.

-weint, Sie hat um mich ge-weint!

The "Supplement" volume (XXI) of the *Gesamtausgabe* of Schubert's works, a thick one, which was published in 1897, assembled nearly 50 pieces. These had been omitted from the classified series for various reasons—because some of the works were, in different ways, incomplete, and because the manuscripts of others had not been disclosed in time. Since 1897 more and more of Schubert's manuscripts have seen the light; about forty of them have been published, either in periodicals, or, in a few cases, by publishers in the orthodox manner. The ten unpublished songs and song-fragments described above have for companions nearly forty or so similarly unpublished instrumental and vocal works. If ever the time comes for the publication of a "Supplement, Part II" to the Schubert *Gesamtausgabe*, it will contain eighty or so works.



## Vaughan Williams and folk-song

### *The relation between folk-song and other elements in his comprehensive style*

BY

ELSIE PAYNE

WHILE it is indubitably fair to assert that folk-song has been the most powerful source of inspiration in the music of Vaughan Williams—certainly the one which he himself has acknowledged most whole-heartedly—such an assertion demands qualification. For elements other than those of folk-song have also aided the evolution of his mature expression. Moreover, the folk-song inspiration itself has not always been directly operative. It has run in two distinct though complementary streams throughout his work. These streams diverged from the time that he started to handle folk-song, and they have retained their separate courses ever since, the one direct, the other indirect. Straightforward arrangements and actual quotations from folk-song comprise only a small and inconspicuous part of his expression. Such direct handling of folk-song, however, has been intermittent throughout his work; it has not increased or diminished either in extent or in appeal. But in more vital composition, and notably in contemplative writing, the stream of inspiration has run more and more indirectly, and has expanded its power. Vaughan Williams has persistently used the basic patterns of his favourite tunes as the bare melodic frameworks—the crude life-force, as it were—of his own musical thought; but thence he has extended and individualized them according to the dictates of subject, *genre*, period of composition and other aesthetic methods which he has felt to be amenable. His mature expression is thus complex, taking over little or nothing from the final versions of folk-song, nevertheless firmly founded on these folk-song structures, and following methods of expansion which are either suggested by, or which are at any rate compatible with the tunes themselves. It is an eminently melodic expression. The whole is an expansion of melodic detail, and is such that the melody maintains its integrity against the total effect.

The dual (direct and indirect) manifestation of folk-song in Vaughan Williams' music can be accounted for by the fact that he did not at first deem folk-song capable of sustaining full-scale composition, so that, during the time he was collecting and making simple arrangements of folk tunes, he was also experimenting to evolve a personal textural style for his more ambitious work. Many of his early songs and part-songs, *Toward the Unknown Region* (1907) and much of the *Sea Symphony* (1910), for instance, were written in a conventional though free and daring diatonic style, following the tendencies of post-Romantic English composers generally. The song cycle, *On Wenlock Edge* (1909), on the other hand, was inspired very largely by French Impressionism,

with which he had become particularly conversant through his study of orchestration with Ravel in the early part of the century, and which in some respects (namely, in the use of elusive intervals and scales, parallel chordal streams, fragmentary themes and episodic developments) has had a lasting appeal for him. And the *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis* (1909) went back to sixteenth-century church polyphony (albeit certain impressionistic idioms also intervened, and the contrapuntal texture of the work is more reminiscent of fifteenth-century and earlier music than of Tudor polyphony).

But at approximately the same time as he wrote these relatively major works, and in addition to his simple settings of folk-song and the *English Folk Songs Suite* (1900), he also wrote some original compositions which were deliberately based on folk-song styles. These works are, *In the Fen Country* (1904), the *Norfolk Rhapsody* (1906)<sup>1</sup> and the incidental music to *The Wasps* of Aristophanes (1909). Only the *Norfolk Rhapsody* is based on actual folk tunes, but all are of indisputable folk-song inspiration; and in expanding his methods of dealing with folk-song, he evolved certain formal and textural idioms which were eventually to become salient parts of his intensely personal and contemplative work. Out of his reference to "The Captain's Apprentice" in *In the Fen Country* and his use of it in the *Norfolk Rhapsody*, emerged his rhapsodic style—that which, with different melodic intervals and derivations, was soon after introduced into the *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis*,<sup>2</sup> expanded in *The Lark Ascending* (1914),<sup>3</sup> and used with careful definition and precise detail in the *Pastoral Symphony* (1922)<sup>4</sup> and other works of that period, again in *Job* (1930)<sup>5</sup> and in most of his later work. In the *Norfolk Rhapsody*<sup>6</sup> and the overture to *The Wasps*<sup>7</sup> too, he introduced a heterogeneous counterpoint. Vaughan Williams used such contrapuntal textures especially for the treatment of folk tunes,<sup>8</sup> but it eventually became a more integral aspect of his mature and episodic contrapuntal style.<sup>9</sup> In all three works, moreover, he adopted a manner of formal development which he has continued to use (though not exclusively)—that of adding a new and more fully developed tune to the initial one instead of developing it. This formal method was suggested spontaneously by using folk-song as motive, for a complete tune cannot be developed even though it may be discussed.

These three aspects of style (to mention the main ones) were retained and used, not only in similar, free, rhapsodic compositions, but also in larger works of definite form. In other words, Vaughan Williams discovered through the writing of these early works—and probably to his own surprise—that folk-song

<sup>1</sup> Vaughan Williams wrote three *Norfolk Rhapsodies*, the second and third of which he has withdrawn.

<sup>2</sup> Page 9 of miniature score, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the opening, and the end section.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. the solo voice theme in the last movement.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Elihu's music, scene VII.

<sup>6</sup> In the middle part, where "The bold young sailor" is introduced against "On board a '98'".

<sup>7</sup> In the last part, page 59 of miniature score.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. the last part of the *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (1912) and the folk-like dances of *Job's sons and daughters* (sc. I). Used also by Holst in the *Somerset Rhapsody* (1906) and *St. Paul's Suite for Strings* (1913).

<sup>9</sup> The opening of the *Pastoral Symphony* and the altar dance in *Job* are outstanding examples.

could indeed inspire and dictate work of great calibre. Henceforward he drew on it both for the melodic material and the textural methods of his most intimate work; and, as a result, his compositions came to diverge into the two types—that which treats folk-song directly, and that which makes an indirect use of it. Vaughan Williams has continued to have a predilection for the simple, unsophisticated character of folk-song, and he has written works as large and important as *Hugh the Drover* (1911) and *Sir John in Love* (1929) in a direct manner;<sup>10</sup> but the profounder beauty and the infinite potentialities of a handful of his favourite folk tunes have been more imperative, and these have vitalized all that is greatest in his work. And where one style has encroached upon the other, it has done so for specific purpose only.<sup>11</sup>

The compositions which use or quote directly from folk-song are these:—

1900.	<i>English Folk Songs Suite.</i>	(Orchestra)
1903.	Two Old German Folk Songs.	(Vocal duet)
1906.	<i>Norfolk Rhapsody.</i>	(Orchestra)
1908.	Folk Songs from the Eastern Counties.	(Collected and arranged for unison voices)
"	Folk Songs from Sussex.	" "
"	"Down among the Dead Men".	(Part-song)
1911.	Eleven English Folk Songs.	(Unison voices)
"	<i>Hugh the Drover.</i>	(Opera)
1912.	"Ward the Pirate".	(Men's voices)
"	"Alister McAlpine's Lament".	(Part-song)
"	"Mannin Veen".	" "
"	"Fantasia on Christmas Carols".	(Baritone and chorus)
1913.	Five English Folk Songs.	(Mixed voices)
1914.	Contributions to the Motherland Song Book.	(Unison voices)
circa	Eight Traditional Carols.	" "
1914.	Twelve Traditional Carols from Herefordshire.	" "
1922.	"Ca' the Yowes".	(Part-song)
1923.	"Seeds of Love".	(Men's voices)
"	"Old King Cole".	(Ballet)
1924.	"The Turtle Dove".	(Baritone and chorus)
1926.	"On Christmas Night" (including "Greensleeves" as a dance).	(Quodlibet)
"	"A Farmer's Son so sweet".	(Part-song)
1929.	<i>Sir John in Love.</i>	(Opera)
1930.	Three Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes.	(Organ)
"	"Loch Lomond".	(Part-song)
1934.	"Acre of Land".	" "
"	<i>Sussex Fantasia.</i> (Now withdrawn.)	(Cello and orchestra)
"	Some accompaniments to "Folk Songs from New-foundland". (Ed. Maud Karpeles.)	(Unison voices)
1935.	Six English Folk Songs.	(Voice and piano)
"	Two English Folk Songs.	(Voice and violin)
"	"The Running Set". (1, two pianos; 2, orchestra)	" "
1937.	Two French Folk Songs.	(Voice and piano)

<sup>10</sup> *Hugh the Drover* actually quotes very little, though in atmosphere it is reminiscent of English folk-song. *Sir John in Love* quotes far more lavishly, and the original songs there are more faithful in melodic detail than those in *Hugh the Drover*.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 22, referring to passages in *Hugh the Drover* and *Sir John in Love*.

- |       |  |                        |
|-------|--|------------------------|
| 1937. | Two German Folk Songs.                                 | (Voice and piano)      |
| 1939. | <i>Five Variants on "Dives and Lazarus"</i> .          | (Harp and orchestra)   |
| 1940. | Nine Carols for Men's Voices.                          |                        |
| 1942. | "Household Music".                                     | (Chamber combinations) |
| 1951. | "Folk Songs of the Four Seasons".                      | (Women's voices)       |
| "     | Incidental Music to <i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i> . | (Orchestra)            |

In "Searching for Lambs" (one of the Two English Folk Songs, 1935), *Five Variants on "Dives and Lazarus"* and the music of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Vaughan Williams has treated his material contemplatively as well as directly. Such works are typical of the composer's latest phase of writing in so far as individual *genres* are merged, or in any case, used in close relationship with one another.

The folk-song elements which have indirectly empowered Vaughan Williams' most complex and significant expression, emanate almost entirely from pentatonic or gapped modal formations. For much of his thematic material he has gone direct to the pentatonic modes, and has fashioned his details in the spirit of pentatonic music.<sup>12</sup> But where he has used actual folk-song formations, he has mainly used those which form the basis of the two East Anglian tunes, "The Captain's Apprentice"<sup>13</sup> and "Bushes and Briars".<sup>14</sup> That is not, of course, to deny that similarities exist between his music and other folk songs. For, since most folk songs belong to certain families or types, there are very many tunes which are related to these particular ancestors of Vaughan Williams' style, hence also possess characteristics recognizable in his expression. Some tunes are actual variants; a large number are related in some but not all respects; while a still vaster body of folk-song can claim some general manners which belong to either or both of these tunes and to much of Vaughan Williams' music. "The Captain's Apprentice" and "Bushes and Briars", however, may be singled out as being, in their individual and comprehensive aspects of melody, rhythm, form and pace, outstandingly vital to his musical thought.

The influence of "The Captain's Apprentice" is apparent in much of the detail of his contemplatively and pentatonically inclined music. This tune (Ex. 1) which he himself collected and arranged in *Folk Songs from the Eastern*

**Ex. 1**

*'The Captain's Apprentice'*



Counties, and which he incorporated into the *Norfolk Rhapsody*, has had a persistent power over a certain part of his melodic writing. Most probably he borrowed it subconsciously; but the affinities which came spontaneously to exist between the melodic and rhythmic shapes of "The Captain's Apprentice" and his own tunes are evidence of the attraction which the tune must have had for him. It is not so much the original or initial framework of this tune which he has drawn upon, as he has done with the "Bushes and Briars"

<sup>12</sup> Especially, for example, in his rhapsodic melody, his scherzi, and in some of his recitatives.

<sup>13</sup> Collected by V. W. from Norfolk (*Journal of the English Folk-song Society*, Vol. II, p. 161).

<sup>14</sup> Collected by V. W. from Essex (*Journal*, Vol. II, pp. 143-5).

series, neither is it any particular variant, but the melodic and rhythmic embellishments which are common to a number of the variants of this awkward but strangely poignant song.

The tune itself is almost purely pentatonic; for although the degree of the second is sometimes added as a passing-note, its mode remains uncertain owing to the absence of the sixth degree. It has a bold outline, an angular and leaping melodic shape. It is irregular in form and rhythm, and it is melodically and rhythmically embellished at the cadence pauses, though not at the final cadence.

Vaughan Williams' quotations from the tune are almost entirely inspired by the mid-cadence patterns. His own embellishments, though arising out of these parts of the tune, are not always literal. But, in spite of variation, they have the same melodic tendencies; and although they belong to that part of his contemplative melodic writing which is somewhat inconsequent and improvisatory in style, yet they have very exact rhythmic figurations. One or two examples will show how Vaughan Williams has adapted the cadence patterns for his own purpose (Ex. 2).

### Ex. 2

(a) 'In the Fen country' (1904) (From cadence 2)



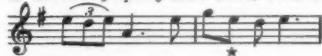
(b) Quartet in G minor (1908) (From cadence 2)



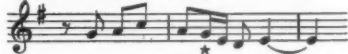
(c) 'Dona nobis Pacem' (1936) (From cadence 2)



(d) London Symphony (1914) (lento) (From cadence 1)



(e) 'Job' (1930) (Elihu's music) (From cadence 1)



(f) 'Flos campi' (1925) (From cadence 3)



(g) 'Job' (Scene 1) (From cadence 3)



The inspiration which Vaughan Williams has derived from the "Bushes and Briars" series of tunes, however, has had a profounder and more pervading effect upon his work than "The Captain's Apprentice".<sup>15</sup> Although "Bushes

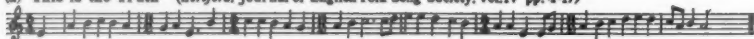
<sup>15</sup> The series is called the "Bushes and Briars" series in this analysis, because this song was the first to appeal to Vaughan Williams. The designation is not meant to imply either that this is the oldest of the tunes, or that it had, eventually, the greatest influence upon his music.

and Briars" is also a gapped East Anglian tune, reflective in character, irregular in form and rhythm, and equally expansive in parts of its melodic outline, yet as a whole it is more shapely and polished. This is even truer of some of its variants—variants which have had as great an influence upon his work as "Bushes and Briars".

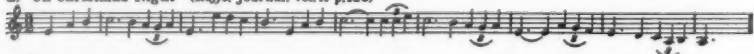
Their obvious refinement, and the fact that they differ so much from one another in subject and are to be found in such widely scattered parts of the country, suggest that these tunes, as we know them, have had a longer and more continuous growth than some of the less polished East Anglian songs. A greater lapse of time, hence a greater accumulation of communal inspiration and experience, must have been brought to bear upon the original, composed structure, to produce the tunes, all of which have individuality, and some of which are exceptionally beautiful. They possess a musical culture to which "The Captain's Apprentice" has no claim; and their appeal to Vaughan Williams seems to have been more profound and long-lived. Just as people in widely separated parts of the country, and for many generations, found the basic structure of these tunes satisfying and amenable to reflective treatment, so Vaughan Williams found it to be a worthy foundation to that part of his expression which is most intimate yet most universal in its appeal. It is significant in this connection that the part of his music which was inspired by these tunes is far less descriptive or rhapsodic than that which was derived from "The Captain's Apprentice"; and in nearly every case it is confined to voices or strings, which are far more expressive of general, universal feeling, than of specific emotions.

### Ex. 3

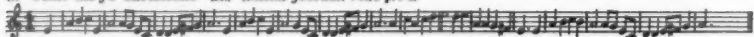
(a) 'This is the Truth' (*Hereford. Journal of English Folk Song Society, Vol. IV pp. 4-17*)



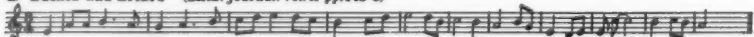
(b) 'On Christmas Night' (*Staffs. Journal, Vol. II p. 126*)



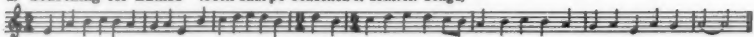
(c) 'Come all ye Christians' (M.) (*Sussex. Journal, Vol. I p. 74*)



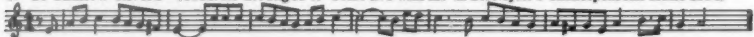
(d) 'Bushes and Briars' (*Sussex. Journal, Vol. II pp. 143-5*)



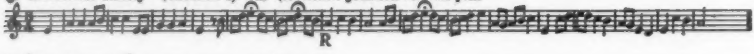
(e) 'Searching for Lambs' (Cecil Sharp's Collection of *Somerset* Songs)



(f) 'To Shallow Rivers' (Trad. air arranged to 'Come live with me' in Dr. Naylor's *Shakespearean Music 1696*)



(g) 'Beautiful Nancy' (Variant 1) (M.) (*Gloucester. Journal, Vol. VIII p. 11*)



(h) 'The Mermaid' (*Newts. Journal, Vol. III p. 47*)





The "Bushes and Briars" series is composed of some thirty variants.<sup>16</sup> Ex. 3 gives a few of these, chosen to show the variety of ways in which the basic structure has developed into melody.<sup>17</sup>

The precise history of these tunes cannot, of course, be ascertained; but the variants must have emanated from one source. Their embryo-structure was probably a single-phrase one, namely Ex. 4. It might have been an even

Ex. 4



simpler, pentatonic pattern (Ex. 5 or Ex. 6),<sup>18</sup> since so many of the variants are

Ex. 5



Ex. 6



gapped in mode and pentatonic in character. And the structure was probably adapted very early in its career to religious words, hence came under the influence of plainsong. Such a plainsong connection would account for the underlying tendency which exists in many of the variants towards the use of speech rhythms. "This is the Truth" was probably the first religious poem to use the structure, for it is this variant which seems to borrow nothing from the other variants. It has the simplest melodic construction; its third phrase is not elaborate like those of some of the variants; its fourth is a more straightforward recapitulation of the first phrase, while its final cadence pattern is extended in the manner of plainsong *melismata*.

Vaughan Williams has made direct arrangements of a number of these tunes,<sup>19</sup> but for the most part, and where they are most vital, they have influenced his work subconsciously.<sup>20</sup> They have rarely led, therefore, to actual or even recognizable quotation, but rather to the adoption of basic thematic frameworks which he could expand into his own melodic and rhythmic patterns; again, to the adoption of the formal and textural styles which are implied by these short and simple tunes. The variants themselves are virtually monothematic, but Vaughan Williams has used this limited thematic material very

<sup>16</sup> Vaughan Williams has arranged or incorporated 14 of these into his work. There are also many tunes which are "lyke" either in some of their detail or in general propensity.

<sup>17</sup> The rest are as follow:—"On Christmas Day" (Hereford), "The Holy Well" (Hereford), "The Maid of Islington" (Sussex), "There is a Fountain" (4 variants, all Hereford), "Low-down in the Broom" (Sussex), "The Carnal and the Crane" (Hereford), "The Lawyer" (Sussex), "The Man that lives" (Herts.), "The Sinner's Dream" (Hereford), "Geordie" (6 variants from Cambs., Somerset (2), Dorset, Lincs. and Norfolk), "Beautiful Nancy" (2nd variant Hants.), "The Cruel Mother" (Dorset), "As I was a-walking" (Dorset) and "I will give my love an apple" (Sussex).

<sup>18</sup> The pattern used in the first phrase of "Bushes and Briars".

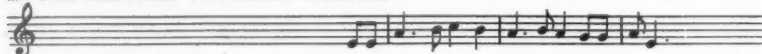
<sup>19</sup> Marked \* in footnote 17, and (a) to (f) in Ex. 3.

<sup>20</sup> In the most general sense, they have inspired an expression which has a strong religious reference. Inasmuch however as Vaughan Williams' religious inspiration has come to him thus indirectly (*i.e.* by way of folk-song, which, whatever its connections, is pre-eminently secular in origin), his work, even that which is most intense, has a distinctly secular as well as religious appeal; and in his latest phase of writing (*e.g.* in the first movement of the sixth Symphony), the most contemplative melodic parts are allied, quite amicably, to what may fairly be called pagan elements.

freely, and in two ways. First and most obviously, he has used the initial melodic pattern for his own themes, though with original rhythms and settings. Ex. 7

**Ex. 7**

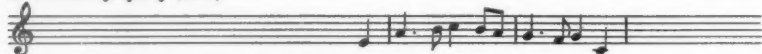
(a) 'Dona nobis Pacem' ('The Veterans'—written 1911)



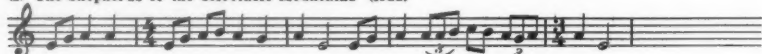
(b) 'Hugh the Drover' (1911)



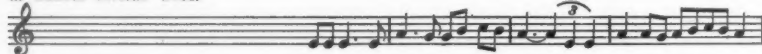
(c) London Symphony (lento)



(d) 'The Shepherds of the delectable Mountains' (1922)



(e) 'Sancta Civitas' (1925)



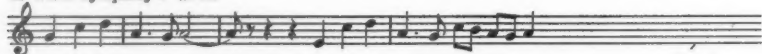
(f) 'Sir John in Love' (1929)



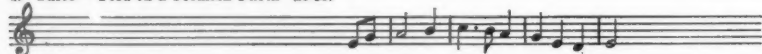
(g) 'Job'



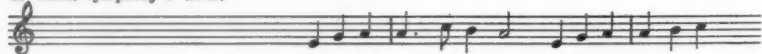
(h) Fifth Symphony 1 (1943)



(i) Suite—'Told on a Flemish Farm' (1945)



(k) Sixth Symphony 4 (1947)



gives a few of his thematic quotations, chronologically.<sup>21,22</sup> Sometimes the pattern is curtailed and altered; often it does not descend to the dominant again, by reason of its context; sometimes again, E is considered as the final instead of the dominant; while in later work it is still more varied and submerged within a full texture, yet remains a quotation.

Secondly, he has used the underlying, bare structure of the folk-song pattern to produce parts of theme, cadences or melodic fragments which are similar in character and particular design to the cadence patterns of some of the variants.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Examples are transposed where necessary to facilitate comparison.

<sup>22</sup> The quotation of the pattern in *Hugh the Drover*—an essentially light-hearted work—is somewhat of an interpolation. It comes at the climax, where Mary prays for Hugh's safety. The one in *Sir John in Love*—Falstaff's song—is a parody.

<sup>23</sup> Ex. 3, (a) to (f) inclusive.



In the folk tunes the cadential derivations of the initial framework vary in melodic detail; and in Vaughan Williams' expression they vary still more. They are not, moreover, always used cadentially or assertively; instead, they may be used reiteratively, as they are, for instance, in "Beautiful Nancy".<sup>24</sup> But they always have a strong reference, and an assured, confident character. Ex. 8 shows some of Vaughan Williams' particular derivations of this curve,

**Ex. 8**

'Five Mystical Songs' (1911) 'Praise' (Assertive) 'Bushes and Briars'

Type 1 Symphony in E minor 1 'Beautiful Nancy' (Reiterative)

'Five Tudor Portraits' (1935) 'My Pretty Bess' (Assertive) 'The Sinners' Dream'

Type 2 'Hugh the Drover'—Duet: Mary and Hugh (Reiterative) 'There is a Fountain' (Assertive) (Reiterative)

'Symphony in D' (1943) (Assertive)

Type 3 'Job's Dream' (Reiterative)

Mass in G minor (1922) 'Agnus Dei' (Assertive) 'To shallow Rivers' (Compressed)

Type 4 'Searching for lambs' (Reiterative)

Symphony in E minor 4 (Reiterative)

Type 5 'Shepherds of the delectable Mountains' (Extended pattern) 'On Christmas Day' (Assertive)

Type 6

("X"), parallels between his melodic types and those of the folk variants being given wherever these exist. One example only of each type is given, but these represent a large and important part of his melodic idiom. The curve has rhythmic as well as melodic variations. These are mostly Vaughan Williams' own and arise out of their context, but in some cases they have a kinship with those of folk tunes. The final cadence of "Bushes and Briars", for instance, has an extended rhythmic pattern which is distinct from that of the preceding

<sup>24</sup> Marked "R" in Ex. 3.

phrases; and Vaughan Williams has likewise extended or changed his rhythmic patterns for assertive and cadential reference, though without precise quotation from the "Bushes and Briars" rhythm. In the *Sea Symphony*, in which it first occurs,<sup>25</sup> it has the rhythm



and in ensuing work, Vaughan Williams has tended to quote this rhythmic pattern (his own variant, as it were) in preference to any of those belonging to folk tunes. Extended rhythms generally apply only to cadential or specially assertive passages; where the "X" curve has a reiterative function, it becomes part of the whole rhythmic pattern.

In a more general way, the impact of these folk-song variants is manifest upon aspects of Vaughan Williams' expression other than upon the thematic. The general characteristics which belong to and which differentiate between the tunes, have also borne upon his music. The basic framework of the variants is itself of indefinite or gapped mode, but the expanded tunes fall modally and formally into three categories, according, it would seem, to their emotional character.<sup>26</sup> The majority (sixteen of the thirty, for example, "This is the Truth", "Searching for Lambs" and "Bushes and Briars") remain indefinite and gapped in mode throughout, in keeping with their reflective or mystical mood. The rest are either dorian or aeolian. The dorian (for example, "Come all ye Christians" and "To Shallow Rivers") are all fully modal from the start; they are lyrical in feeling, and generally use a plain rather than an "X" final cadence. But the aeolian (for example, "On Christmas Night" and "The Mermaid") start gapped, and add the aeolian modal degrees by way of dramatic development, often not until the final phrase; and they mostly end with the "X" cadential curve.

In his musical constructions, Vaughan Williams has followed these folk-song modal and emotional tendencies. He has rarely written for long stretches in any one mode, since full textural expression demands some degree of key or modal change. But he has certainly tended to use ambiguous or gapped modes for his initial themes; and in so far as he has developed his themes modally or structurally, he has distinguished between the purely meditative, the lyrical and the dramatic, according to the principles inherent in these folk variants.

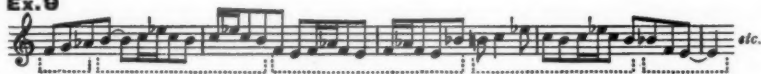
The most common structural method in the folk songs—that of adding phrases to the initial gapped one which are also gapped and equally simple—could not, of course, be used extensively as a principle of development in large-scale work. But Vaughan Williams has followed the essential character of these particular variants in some of his most meditative expression. The supreme example of this, perhaps, is the last movement of the *Symphony in E minor* (1947), in which a tiny, undeveloping theme, is reiterated and refocused

<sup>25</sup> In the scherzo, p. 67 of vocal score.

<sup>26</sup> The same general propensities to modal writing apply also to folk tunes other than these particular variants.

within a sparse and freely imitative counterpoint.<sup>27</sup> The thematic phrase (Ex. 9) is itself expanded by being moved into its "dominant"<sup>28</sup> tetrachord

Ex. 9



and back, to form a continuous melodic movement; and as the work progresses, it is moved on to other, nearly related dominants and finals, thus giving an illusion of growing complexity, even of chromaticism. But it is only an illusion, and its mode never becomes fully defined. Just as in "This is the Truth", the rise to the higher note (in the third phrase) and the variations of melodic pattern give an illusion of development, so in this music the wider context gives an illusion of growth; but in neither case is there any development of modal character, hence of structure. Here there is no cutting up or change of theme, no melodic interplay, no change of harmonic or instrumental colouring, no difference in the volume of sound or in momentum, and no change, though a pause, in the texture. This is the most important example of Vaughan Williams' completely reiterative expression, the only movement in which the reiterative style is maintained consistently. But such uneventful contemplative writing is frequently to be found in parts of movements or works, in, for example, *Job's Dream*,<sup>29</sup> which is slight in length but which recurs intermittently in the *Masque*, often too in his *niente* endings (as, for example, the end of the *Pastoral Symphony*) which denote the dying down or anticlimax of eventful contemplation.

Where he has written lyrical melody, melody which expresses a definite emotion yet no growth or change of feeling, he has written either in the dorian mode, or in a mode which has some inclination towards the dorian, and which is, in any case, fully defined at the start. In "Is my team ploughing",<sup>30</sup> for instance, he uses a simple dorian melody. In the "Fantasia on Christmas Carols"<sup>31</sup> and *The Lark Ascending*,<sup>32</sup> on the contrary, he uses gapped themes, but with settings which are dorian throughout; while in the minuet of the oboe Concerto (1945), the initial dorian tune is followed by melody which is at first aeolian, then modally indefinite; but the initial dorian melody is simple and complete, and the aeolian part which follows is complementary to it, an addition rather than a development out of it.

By far the greatest expanse of Vaughan Williams' expression, however, follows the suggestions which are implicit in the small body of aeolian tunes; for the merging of initial gapped patterns into modal melody is open to many

<sup>27</sup> The only addition to this imitative counterpoint consists of the pairs of chords (on page 148), which are added as commentary and serve almost as a pause in the expression.

<sup>28</sup> Using the term "dominant" in the original and wider sense of the word.

<sup>29</sup> Scene IV of the *Masque*.

<sup>30</sup> The second song of the cycle, "On Wenlock Edge".

<sup>31</sup> The opening—the setting of "This is the Truth".

<sup>32</sup> Page 4 of miniature score.

more possibilities and variations. In the case of these "Bushes and Briars" variants, the development is from gapped to aeolian mode only, and Vaughan Williams has sometimes limited his melodic developments in the same way.<sup>33</sup> More often he has developed with different or greater complexity, yet following this folk-song potentiality by starting with simple, pentatonic or gapped themes, and adding complexity during the process of expansion. In *Hugh the Drover*, for instance, the pentatonic theme used in "Here on my throne"<sup>34</sup> becomes a mixolydian melody. In the *Credo* of the Mass in G minor (1922) the opening theme remains modally uncertain, but the harmony develops into aeolian against the assertive "X" melodic cadence. In "On Wenlock Edge",<sup>35</sup> the pentatonic melody becomes chromatic as the feeling grows impelling. In "The Shepherds of the delectable Mountains" (1922), the opening theme which is gapped and rhapsodic in character, leads to various modal and tonal ambiguities and separate dorian fragments, but it finally settles into an aeolian tune.<sup>36</sup> And in later work still greater complexities of mode are used, sometimes bitonal in character. The tune from the first movement of the Symphony in E minor,<sup>37</sup> in which alternate major and minor sixths and alternate major and minor thirds are added to the initial gapped fragment, is an instance of his later methods of melodic development.

In large-scale work of this type, the initial and undeveloped thematic idea is first developed as theme (in the exposition, if the work can be divided into orthodox symphonic parts), and then discussed within a developing textural context. Development for Vaughan Williams thus means the growth of melodic structure (over and above the growth of melodic interest),<sup>38</sup> followed by the textural complexity which results from the use of structurally developed melodic parts (over and above increase of *timbre*, pace, rhetorical devices, key changes, and so on). In most cases too, especially in the most eventful of Vaughan Williams' contemplative writing there is a tendency to increase textural complexity by heterogeneous means. A new, often alien theme is juxtaposed against the contrapuntal discussion of the main theme—a probable outcome of folk dance methods.<sup>39</sup> Sometimes (as in the *Norfolk Rhapsody*), this is a fully developed theme, thus an additional element in the complex structural whole; sometimes it is a sparser, motivic, even an atonal one (as in the second movement of the fifth Symphony<sup>40</sup> and the first movement of the Sixth<sup>41</sup>), in such cases introduced as foil or contrast to the main, fully modal and melodic theme. The type of heterogeneous material thus varies according to intention, and it is not invariably used; but it is a powerful aspect of Vaughan

<sup>33</sup> E.g. "I got me flowers". No. 2 of the "Mystical Songs" (1911).

<sup>34</sup> The song beginning on page 199 of the vocal score.

<sup>35</sup> No. 1 of the cycle.

<sup>36</sup> Pages 1 and 2 of vocal score.

<sup>37</sup> Page 26 of score.

<sup>38</sup> His growth of melodic development may be compared in this respect with that of Rubbra. Rubbra also tends to extend and develop his themes melodically before discussing them texturally; but his developments consist of the addition of phrases which grow in compass and interest rather than in modal structure.

<sup>39</sup> See also page 104, and footnote 8.

<sup>40</sup> Page 38, etc., of score.

<sup>41</sup> Page 34 of score.

Williams' counterpoint, and does indeed play an important part in his processes of development.

The several rhythmic styles of the variants have also had an important influence on Vaughan Williams' differentiated expressions. All the variants are, to some extent, irregular, though not necessarily in the same sense. They are all fundamentally irregular inasmuch as the initial pattern, from which they grew, has no defined rhythm. "This is the Truth" and "On Christmas Night"—variants which have maintained their prose-rhythmic character throughout their development—are examples of tunes which are irregular in this respect; while variants such as "Come all ye Christians" and "Beautiful Nancy"<sup>42</sup>—tunes which have adopted distinctly metrical rhythms—are only indirectly or basically so. Others, however (for example, "Bushes and Briars" and "The Mermaid")—those which are mainly but not consistently metrical—possess an irregularity of a rather different sort beyond their subtle and basic one, namely that which consists of a deviation from, rather than a lack of rhythmic pattern. These variants have an obvious irregularity which strikes both against their fundamental prose-rhythmic character and against their consciously adopted metrical patterns. It is due in some instances to careless interpretation on the part of the singers, but in others to a subconscious clash between the basic rhythm of the melodic pattern and the metres which had been consciously adopted. Some tunes thus affected are merely clumsy, but others (notably "Bushes and Briars") gain in vitality and charm. "Bushes and Briars" is made up of phrases which are each mainly metrical, but which do not add together to produce a smooth continuity; rather an episodic succession.

The speech rhythms of some of the most austere and beautiful of the tunes, however ("This is the Truth" and all those which have had some plainsong connection) have perhaps had the profoundest effect upon Vaughan Williams' contemplative and most personal work. The exact rhythmic valuation of the words is a marked feature of these tunes, and, as his own style has matured, he has followed them more than the other variants. Inspired by these variants (also by the free verse of Walt Whitman, and later by the seventeenth-century prose texts of Bunyan and the authorized version of the Bible), he has tended increasingly to use prose-rhythmic patterns for his melody, not only for that which accompanies words, but for purely abstract melody too. In particular, he has favoured the mingling of couplet and triplet figurations, such as occur in "On Christmas Night" and "The Mermaid".<sup>43</sup>

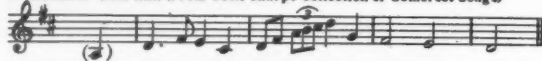
While the "Bushes and Briars" variants have furnished the most salient and characteristic of Vaughan Williams' melodic ideas, they are of course by no means responsible for all his thematic material. There is another basic type, for instance, which is used for assured rather than reflective contemplative expression. Such melody often appears as the culmination of previous

<sup>42</sup> Marked M in Ex. 3.

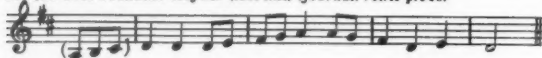
<sup>43</sup> The triplet figures in these tunes are quite different, both in origin and in effect, from such as appear in "The Captain's Apprentice", "Spurn Point", "Lowdown in the Broom" etc.—figures which are introduced purely as musical elaboration, and which have no organic connection with the words.

**Ex. 10 (a) Folk Song Patterns**

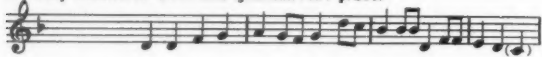
1. 'Bedlam' (last line) (From Cecil Sharp's Collection of Somerset Songs)



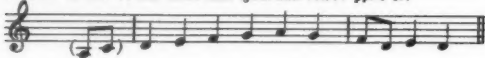
2. 'The bold Princess Royal' (last line) (Journal. Vol. II p. 145)



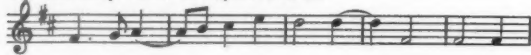
3. 'Whip Jamboree' (first line) (Journal. Vol. V p. 297)



4. 'This is the Truth' (last line) (Journal. Vol. IV pp. 4-17)

**Ex. 10 (b) Major melodies**

1. 'Sound Sleep' (1903) (Transposed from Bb)



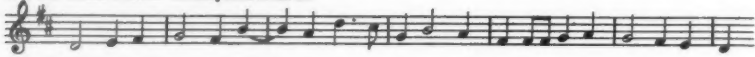
2. Sea Symphony 1 (1910)



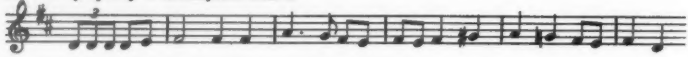
3. 'Flos campi' 6



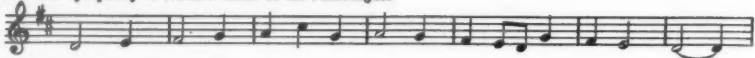
4. 'Dona nobis Pacem' (Transposed from Eb)



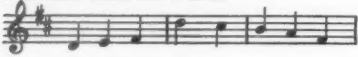
5. Fifth Symphony 3 (Transposed from G)



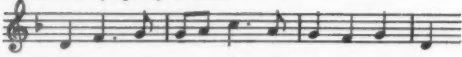
6. Fifth Symphony 4 (Countertheme to the Passacaglia)



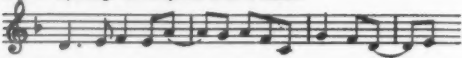
7. Sinfonia Antartica 4 (1952)

**(c) Quasi-minor melodies**

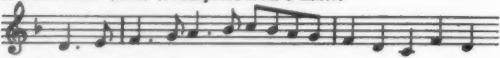
1. Pastoral Symphony 4 (1922)



2. 'Job' (opening) (Transposed from G minor)



3. 'Benedicite' (1930) (Transposed from G minor)

**(d) Melodies with ambiguous mode**

1. Sinfonia Antartica 1





reflection or as catharsis, and it is often, though not exclusively, major in mode. This melodic type seems to have had no particular folk-song derivation, but probably derives from more than one, or a typical folk-song pattern. Ex. 10 shows some of Vaughan Williams' melodies in relation to one or two folk-song phrases.<sup>44</sup> The basic structure is a plain ascent from the final up to a high note (the fifth, sixth or high final), in most cases followed by a descent back to the final. They rise easily; their embellishments vary, but they are always slight. There are no awkward leaps, and they begin, and generally end on a strong final. Their rhythms, especially in the less assertive instances, tend to be meandering and prose-rhythmic, often using dotted notes or triplets. Their pace is always moderate, their settings straightforward and dignified.

Of all the influences that have borne upon Vaughan Williams' musical language, that of folk-song has been the most fundamentally as well as the most obviously powerful, and all the rest has, perforce, been made subservient to it. But other models, particularly French Impressionism, and early vocal polyphonic styles, have had a supplementary influence. Vaughan Williams cannot rightly be called a derivative composer; had he been so, he would probably have followed one rather than many influences, and with a greater consistency than, in fact, he has done. But he is a more intuitive composer than some, and he has clung spontaneously to all those details of idiom and method that he has found vital to his own musical thought. Moreover, once he has assimilated any adopted style, he has not discarded it, however much he may have had to readjust.

He first became conversant with French Impressionism through his study with Ravel at the beginning of the century; and at once the subject matter of impressionistic music and its elusive atmosphere and orchestral colouring appealed to him. Vaughan Williams, for all his faith in the common things of life, has always been drawn towards fantastic subjects and escapist settings. (Even folk-song of course, paints an idyllic and lyrical, often an exaggerated picture of life.) Whereas Debussy went mainly to mediaeval legend for his ideas, and Ravel to fairy story, Vaughan Williams chose more reflective subjects, such as were suggested by contemplative folk songs, Walt Whitman's, Bunyan's and Biblical texts, to produce his other-worldly, mystical expression. But the works of all three composers are alike in that they are removed in atmosphere from the pedestrian world of here and now.

The effect of his study with Ravel was most obviously and immediately operative upon his orchestration, particularly in the production of light, shimmering and translucent effects, many of them harp *arpeggi*,<sup>45</sup> and in the separation of his orchestral colours into distinct groups, each attached to its

<sup>44</sup> The first of V. W.'s tunes to use this basic pattern comes in the middle part of the early part-song "Sound Sleep" (1903). It must thus have arisen quite independently of folk-song; but because its structure accidentally happened to accord with a basic folk-song type it was used in subsequent composition, and has become moulded into a characteristic melodic type.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. the end of "On Wenlock Edge", no. 3, and the bell representations in no. 5; the *London* Symphony, page 66 of miniature score and the beginning of the Epilogue; the fourth movement of the *Pastoral* Symphony (pp. 93-8 of miniature score); "*Sancta Civitas*" (p. 36 etc.).

own equally distinct thematic and textural material.<sup>46</sup> It is another aspect of French Impressionism, however, which has had a more important impact upon the working out of the details of Vaughan Williams' textural style—namely the blocking out of melody in consecutive chords or triads, to produce the parallel chordal streams which also play such an important part in the music of Debussy and Ravel. In his adaptation of this musical idiom the influence of Impressionism has verged upon that of pre-sixteenth-century vocal polyphony and hence has become a singularly important aspect of his musical expression.

It has generally been averred that Vaughan Williams adopted the methods of Tudor vocal polyphony in his contrapuntal work, especially in the *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis* and the Mass in G minor. And certainly, in his consideration of past methods, he tended to ignore the music of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially the German music of that period, and to explore rather the resources of English music before its decline in the Baroque era. True it is also that, in some of the most general and obvious respects, he took his direction from Tudor church music and the Elizabethan madrigal;<sup>47</sup> for instance, in his use of non-modulating contrapuntal textures, flexible rhythms, and in his practice of alternating contrapuntal sections with passages which are primarily harmonic in interest, the parts moving note against note. Some of his earlier and slighter works, moreover (such as his part-song, "Love is a Sickness", 1913, and some of the four-part arrangements of English folk songs) do follow Tudor methods in broad principle; while his madrigal, "Come away Death" (1918) is typically Elizabethan in style. But in other and more essential aspects of style his music follows pre-sixteenth-century choral styles rather than the more highly polished ones of Tudor and Elizabethan times. Just as he has explored the sources of folk-song for his melodic ideas, so he has spontaneously penetrated to the beginnings of the polyphonic evolution (*circa* the ninth to the fifteenth century) for textural inspiration. This pre-sixteenth-century polyphony, being in its crude state, is essentially melodic in conception. It is based on plainsong and therefore, thematically, it has much in common with that part of Vaughan Williams' music which is based on his favourite folk-song idioms;<sup>48</sup> it is modal and, at any rate in the very early stages of its development, practically free from harmonic implication. It was natural therefore, that Vaughan Williams, in evolving a contrapuntal style which would have a primary regard for the melodic value of his favourite folk-song types, should subconsciously follow some of the particular methods of this early polyphony which was motivated by similar material and intention.

His music differs from that of the sixteenth century in several important respects. In the first place, Tudor polyphony is more diatonic in feeling. By

<sup>46</sup> The opening of the *Pastoral Symphony* is an example of such a separation of musical detail and colour.

<sup>47</sup> Most of this music had only been made accessible for study (by Dr. Edmund Fellowes) in the early part of this century.

<sup>48</sup> *Viz.* those folk tunes which probably had a plainsong connection, and the episodic forms of tunes like "Bushes and Briars", "Dives and Lazarus" etc.

the sixteenth century the major-minor diatonic system had pretty well supplanted the use of modes (though modes survived in some works, for example, in the anthems of Weelkes), and cadential harmonic progressions had become established. Vaughan Williams' contrapuntal work, on the contrary, is mainly modal, his harmony definitely subservient to his melodic outlines. His modal counterpoint is not even similar in structure to that of modal Tudor music, his modes being often far more abruptly changed, and the tonal centres changed as well as, or instead of the modal ones. In Tudor music, major thirds, sixths and sevenths are sometimes to be found alternately with minor thirds, sixths and sevenths, following the rules of *musica ficta* (as in Byrd's "*Ave verum corpus*", Ex. 11), and this creates a certain feeling of modal am-

**Ex. 11**

*'Ave Verum Corpus'* (Byrd)



biguity. But Vaughan Williams' ambiguities are far more extensive and significant, and are produced in completely different ways. In the *Benedictus* of the Mass in G minor, for instance (Ex. 12), he creates a modal ambiguity

**Ex. 12**

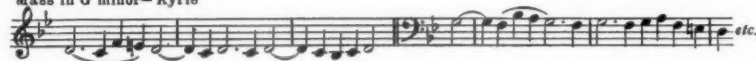
Mass in G minor—*Benedictus*  
(Soprano Solo)



by shifting a fragment from one tetrachord to another without altering the tonality of the whole, thus changing the intervals of the fragment itself and hence its mode. And in the *Kyrie* (Ex. 13) he produces an ambiguity of key

**Ex. 13**

Mass in G minor—*Kyrie*



by shifting a fragment complete, without upsetting its intervals or mode, hence temporarily changing the tonal centre of the passage. Such ambiguity is, in each case, the result of melodic extension or discussion. In later work, he creates an ambiguity of mode or tonality in the melody itself. In the B minor tune from the sixth Symphony, for instance (Ex. 14), alternate major and minor thirds, sixths and sevenths are introduced (including the sharp leading note to the dominant), not, however, as chromatic notes or as parts of a mixed or complex mode, but as the result of adding together, in mosaic fashion, a series of melodic fragments, each in its own particular mode.

Secondly, and mainly as a result of the growing sensitivity to diatonicism, the counterpoint of sixteenth-century English music, especially that of the religious music,<sup>49</sup> is already such that the whole is more vital than the parts which form it. It is a comprehensive texture; composed, it is true, of individual, horizontal threads, but appealing to the ear in combination. In Vaughan Williams' music the melodic thread is itself the epitome of the counterpoint. Imitations or counter-themes refocus or discuss the initial thread in such a way as neither to submerge nor sublimate it. These two types of counterpoint demand slightly different manners of approach and aural judgment. In Tudor music one listens to the separate parts in relationship; in Vaughan Williams' music one appreciates the separate parts for their own sake, though aware of the relationship which exists between them by virtue of their proximity. Where his counterpoint is made up of homogeneous themes or imitations, there is at least a structural relationship between them. But often his melodic threads are heterogeneous with one another (one melody against another, or tuneful melody against rhapsody, and so on), and in combination, produce dissonances and ambiguities which are far more extreme than those which result from the occasional false relations in Tudor counterpoint; yet they are often easier on the ear, in so far as these heterogeneous threads are intentionally and intrinsically individual, and not, as in Tudor counterpoint, intended as parts of a mainly consonant whole.

**Ex. 14**

Symphony in E minor 1



Differences between Tudor and Vaughan Williams' styles extend, thirdly, to the structures of the parts which have a note against note rhythm, and which alternate with the purely contrapuntal parts. In Tudor music these parts are harmonically propagated, and are really chord progressions. In Vaughan Williams' music they are more frequently streams of parallel triads, which follow a melodic line rather than a harmonic system. In his use of such chordal methods, Vaughan Williams was probably most directly inspired (as has already been suggested) by French Impressionism; but in following these impressionistic styles, he actually adopted pre-sixteenth-century choral styles, namely the methods of early *organum*,<sup>50</sup> the English sixth chord style,<sup>51</sup> and *faux bourdon*.<sup>52</sup> At first he used the style, as Debussy and Ravel did, somewhat

<sup>49</sup> And still more the music of Palestrina, Vittoria and Lassus, contemporary with English music of the sixteenth century.

<sup>50</sup> The first attempt at contrapuntal writing (ninth to tenth centuries), whereby a *cantus firmus* is accompanied above and/or below by parallel or approximately parallel fourths or fifths.

<sup>51</sup> An extension of *organum* (circa thirteenth century), according to which a *cantus firmus* in the lower parts is accompanied by parallel parts above, to form chords of the sixth.

<sup>52</sup> Probably a French variant of the sixth chord style which grew up in the early fifteenth century, in which the *cantus firmus* is in the treble part, and the 6/3 chords follow below to form a textural rather than a contrapuntal idiom.

indiscriminately, and mainly to create textural and atmospheric effects. Debussy often (though by no means always) used the whole-tone scale in such passages, but Ravel and Vaughan Williams used it very little. Instead, they made a more frequent use of pentatonic and gapped modes. All three, however, on occasion, used the orthodox major and minor scales, blocking out their major or minor melodies in 5/3 or 6/3 triads, sometimes also in 6/4 chords, secondary sevenths, ninths and so on. The modern complex chords produced their more striking effects; the archaic scales and bare intervals, their austerer and elusive impressions.

The idiom of parallel chordal writing is primarily of textural importance; and the *consensus* of sound which is produced by such parallels is more vital in atmospheric expression than the character of the theme which is used. Nevertheless a subtle distinction can be drawn between that which depends mainly on the chord which is used to produce the parallel stream, and that which depends on the melody and the way in which the lower parallel threads are related to the upper theme. The first has mainly a vertical interest, the latter a horizontal or contrapuntal one. With Debussy parallel writing had chiefly a chordal implication, melody being a somewhat arbitrary arrangement of the notes of the scale out of which the pivot chord was fashioned. But with Ravel, and even more with Vaughan Williams, it came to have a greater melodic significance. Even in "On Wenlock Edge" (the first song of the cycle) which marks the first appearance of the style in Vaughan Williams' music, textural colouring is the result of the manner in which the melodies are varied and related to one another (the particular character of this passage dependent upon the fact that the lowest thread of the three-part parallel passage is a whole-tone instead of a pentatonic melody like the other two). And in the *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis*,<sup>58</sup> the parallel writing is still more vitally melodic in importance, and may be thought of as melody reinforced by two or three identical threads, instead of texture in its own right. As such it has *organum* character.

When chordal streams are used with a purely textural intention (as they are by Debussy and, often, fifteenth-century *faux bourdon*), the choice of scale and chord are of paramount importance. But when (as in *organum* and the English sixth-chord style) their function is a more melodic one, then the way in which the lower threads of the stream run in relation to the melody is of equal or greater importance. If the whole-tone scale is used to produce both the melody and the chord, the parallel melodies come out to be identical with one another in all except pitch (as in Ex. 15). But when a five-, six- or seven-note mode is

Ex. 15



used, the parallel threads may run either true to tonality, in which case they will be only approximately parallel with one another and different in mode (as with the pentatonic mode and the dorian mode in Ex. 16)—or else true to

<sup>58</sup> At the end of page 1, *etc.*, of miniature score.







altogether and became distinct contrapuntal threads. The parallel types of counterpoint, however, recurred from time to time in somewhat different forms, notably in the English sixth-chord style and in *faux bourdon*. But by the end of the fifteenth century, the system of tonality (though still a modal tonality) was sufficiently established to dictate a diatonic or tonal, in preference to a real treatment of parallel lines.

Ravel and Debussy, for the most part, used tonal systems, as in *faux bourdon*, when writing with scales other than the whole-tone. But Vaughan Williams has used both methods. The fact that he has used so many pentatonic patterns and melody with plainsong character has led him to write in early *organum* style as well as impressionistic ones, and to extend the real treatment of melody to that which is not pentatonic or modal.<sup>54</sup> By using both tonal and real methods, and by mixing and making further personal adaptations, he has extended the atmospheric potentialities and subtleties of this parallel textural writing. Sometimes the parallels are merely an alternative to harmony, and the system used is therefore a diatonic one, as in "The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains",<sup>55</sup> where a parallel chordal stream, composed of flute, cor anglais and viola threads, is played (first as 6/3 then as 6/4 triads) as an accompaniment to the second shepherd's theme ("and He laid down His life for them"). The melodic threads are only approximately parallel to one another, and the positions of the triads are such that the total effect is concordant. Where, however (as on page 11 of the same work), parallel chords are used with a more independent textural rôle, they are fashioned so as to produce a consistent textural pattern, even if this involves a confused tonal system. The meandering thirds in the upper string parts constitute the important feature of this texture, and they are changed to fourths only in one or two instances; but the positions of the triads are inevitably mixed.

In the Alleluias of "*Sancta Civitas*",<sup>56</sup> the melodies run tonally, but Vaughan Williams has here chosen to use the flat sixth with the sharp seventh of the minor scale, in order to produce an augmented second in the lower line, and a dissonant total textural effect. A similar effect is again produced, though by different means, in the opening of the *Romance* for harmonica and string orchestra (1952). The augmented second appears here also in one of the melodic threads (this time in the inner of the three parts), but, being a much later work, it has a bitonal propagation. All these are instances (and there are many others)<sup>57</sup> of textural effect produced by tonal or complex tonal systems. Sometimes he has used mixed systems of parallel writing. One part of a parallel texture perhaps runs contrary to the others (as in the opening of *The Lark ascending*), or the four parts run in two contrary pairs (as in the *Agnus Dei* of the Mass in G minor<sup>58</sup> and in the last movement of the sixth Symphony<sup>59</sup>); or

<sup>54</sup> In the opening of the first movement of the *London* Symphony, for instance, after the Introduction, 6/3 chords accompany a chromatic theme with real movement.

<sup>55</sup> Page 4 of vocal score.

<sup>56</sup> Page 3 of vocal score, and again later.

<sup>57</sup> Including the beginning of "On Wenlock Edge" mentioned above.

<sup>58</sup> Page 19 of score.

<sup>59</sup> Page 149 of score.

tonal and real methods are alternated, as in the *Gloria* of the Mass in G minor, where 5/3 triads are used with tonal movement for the words "have mercy upon us", and 6/3 triads with real movement for the words "receive our prayer". By such means a slight gradation of intensity of feeling is effected.

It is probably in his most elusive—whether mystical or escapist—expression that real parallel constructions are most deliberately and significantly used, as, for example, in the *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis*,<sup>60</sup> the part of the *Gloria* of the Mass just referred to, the beginning of *Flos Campi* (1925), the horn theme in the first movement of the sixth Symphony,<sup>61</sup> the "Oxford Elegy" (1952),<sup>62</sup> and so on. In such expression, it is not generally the main theme which is thus treated; or if it is, the treatment forms only one aspect of its presentation. In the *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis*, for instance, parallel contrapuntal treatment is used as an alternative to imitative discussion—one part only of the contemplative event; in *Flos Campi*, only one thread of a contrapuntal whole is thus blocked out; while in the sixth Symphony,<sup>63</sup> the Mass in G minor, the "Oxford Elegy", and indeed in most instances, the blocked out theme is an interpolated fragment, one which adds event or denotes a change in the melodic discussion. With its note against note rhythm, it provides a contrast to the rest of the counterpoint which is formed of overlapping and prose-rhythmic phrases. In the first movement of the sixth Symphony the fragment, which is a striking one, appears heterogeneously with other material and provides events of some dimension; while the contrary fifths in the last movement of the Symphony constitute, as it were, a pause in the contemplative experience.

One more important aspect of Vaughan Williams' textural writing should be mentioned here, inasmuch as it conspires towards his essentially melodic style, namely his use of the pedal point. The pedal has been a common device in polyphonic writing from the time of the early evolution of counterpoint. Probably owing something to the drum or drone accompaniments in certain types of folk dance, it came to serve as a definite and solid tonal foundation in polyphonic writing generally after contrapuntal excursions into other keys. Vaughan Williams has used his pedals with the same essential intention of providing a solid foundation in parts which might otherwise seem insecure. Because of his tendency, especially in contemplative writing, to write with and maintain a certain degree of tonal or modal ambiguity, he has not always used the pedal to provide a straightforward tonal solidarity. But he has always accepted the need for some focal point or pivot of interest—a temporary or arbitrary final, even if not a true key-note—and he has used his pedals to impress that focal point. They occur particularly in writing which has very little texture, hence solidarity, against the sparse imitative counterpoint of *Job's Dream*,<sup>64</sup> for instance, and in many of his *niente* endings; also in "Is my

<sup>60</sup> The end of page 1, etc., of miniature score.

<sup>61</sup> Page 7 of score.

<sup>62</sup> Page 14 of vocal score.

<sup>63</sup> Page 148, etc., of score.

<sup>64</sup> Scene IV of *Job*.

team ploughing" from "On Wenlock Edge", the opening of the "Fantasia on Christmas Carols" and of "The Shepherds of the delectable Mountains". Each of the last-mentioned tunes is constructed out of the "Bushes and Briars" formula, and each is accompanied by a pedal which gives an elusive foundation, suitable to its context. He has also used the device of a pedal in very complex contrapuntal and dissonant writing, in this case a dissonant pedal, which has the effect of disintegrating the complex synthesis, and of reducing the whole to its parts (as in "*Sancta Civitas*", page 21 of score). Vaughan Williams has thus used his pedals with various tonal inferences. Moreover he has not always put his pedals in the bass part; sometimes they are inverted pedals (as in the end of the "Oxford Elegy", page 37 onwards); sometimes figures instead of a single note (as in "*Sancta Civitas*", page 2, and the rhythmic timpani and brass motive in the second movement of the sixth Symphony). And sometimes his melodic constructions themselves possess an implied pedal. Such melodies are often unaccompanied, or accompanied by a heterogeneous texture, and therefore have to impress their own tonality or focal point of interest. The solo voice theme from the *Pastoral* Symphony is an important example of such melody, but they are frequently to be found in Vaughan Williams' writing (the tune, for instance, of "Is my team ploughing" from "On Wenlock Edge" and the oboe theme in the beginning of *Flos Campi*), and they are always of a similar, semi-rhapsodic, semi-contemplative character.

The foregoing analysis of the melodic and textural origins of Vaughan Williams' style, and of his intuitive methods of assimilating them, shows, above all, that his most characteristic and contemplative expression is a fundamentally melodic one. The separate constituents of his style are all dependent upon melodic ideas, and these are largely, if not always directly or recognizably inspired by folk-song. And his textures are formed, in the main, by the discussion or reiteration of the melodic idea in contrapuntal language. Divergencies from the contrapuntal idiom occur, of course—divergencies such as the occasional *arpeggii*, chords or *ostinati* which add colour to the contrapuntal parts,<sup>65</sup> or again, the jubilant passages which sometimes come as climax to eventful contemplation, and which consist of note against note textures.<sup>66</sup> But these appear either, as in the first case, as background and extraneous to contemplation, or, as in the second, as a supplement to contemplation. The purely contemplative experience is expressed solely in contrapuntal terms.

Since melody is the epitome of Vaughan Williams' whole expression, and since melody is, for the most part, inspired by folk-song, it follows that the whole must be basically inspired by folk-song too. Folk-song suffuses his large-scale work, though many of the details of his textures and forms have been partially directed by other models, and though all has been ultimately

<sup>65</sup> E.g. in the first movement of the *London* Symphony (p. 66 of miniature score) and the beginning of the Epilogue; the fourth movement of the *Pastoral* Symphony (pp. 93-8 etc.).

<sup>66</sup> E.g. in "*Dona nobis pacem*" (1936) starting on page 50 of vocal score; "Sons of Light" (p. 43 of vocal score) etc.

modified by his own individuality and musical insight. The resulting expression is inevitably one of melodic integrity. Contrapuntal imitations emphasize melody instead of submerging it by textural synthesis; homogeneous counter-themes form descants to, or variants of the main idea; heterogeneous contrapuntal themes retain their melodic character regardless of their contiguity;<sup>67</sup> parallel chordal passages, though possessing a textural function, have yet a primarily melodic or horizontal focus; and pedals, austere supporters of melody, often take the place of full diatonic texture.

All form is "melody writ large", as Donald Tovey says in his book, *Musical Textures*; this is outstandingly true of Vaughan Williams' music. His melodies are not necessarily the same as, or as simple as those of folk-song, his forms by no means straightforward enlargements; for Vaughan Williams is a modern composer and very much of his age. But his complexities, far from being a veneer, are the inevitable response of an individual twentieth-century mind to unsophisticated beauty. And to enjoy Vaughan Williams is truly to be brought into intimate contact with the most elemental facets of music.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Rubbra's counterpoints, which are often equally discordant, but which are fashioned and allied together deliberately, to form their particular discordancies. Vaughan Williams' are discordant merely in so far as the separate melodies are independent of one another.

## Virgil Thomson's Four Saints in Three Acts

BY

EVERETT HELM

*Four Saints in Three Acts* by Virgil Thomson is on the one hand a very American work; yet it is not typically American. It is, in fact, an *unicum*. There is only one other opera in or out of America with which it can be compared—the same composer's later piece, *The Mother of Us All*. Both are written on texts by Gertrude Stein, and both have certain Thomsonian musical practices in common.

The text of *Four Saints in Three Acts* is highly original and to a certain extent provocative. Gertrude Stein was born in California but spent most of her life in Paris. Like many other authors of the second and third decades of this century she felt a strong necessity to free the language of literature from the turgidity of the romantic and post-romantic periods. Various poets and authors were searching for new forms of literary expression in which the language should be purified and renewed; Stein was one of the most radical among them. She often ignored not only accepted principles of syntax but also, apparently, anything resembling the "logical" sequence of thoughts and ideas, with the result that many of her writings seem to be without continuity, in the accepted sense of the word. Rather than make a plain statement or tell a straight story she played with words and with the sound of words, constructing sound-patterns seemingly for their own sake; or she expressed herself in such roundabout and hidden ways that the average reader can miss the point entirely.

In *Four Saints*, for instance, Saint Ignatius predicts the last judgment in these words: "Around, around is a sound and around" and describes his vision of the Holy Ghost as: "Pigeons on the grass alas. Short longer grass short longer longer shorter yellow grass. Pigeons large pigeons on the shorter longer yellow grass alas pigeons on the grass". Many remarks, completely intelligible in themselves, have little or nothing to do with the context. When Saint Settlement suddenly interpolates the question: "If it were possible to kill five thousand Chinamen by pressing a button would it be done?", *Commère* replies: "Saint Teresa not interested", and the action, if such it may be termed, continues. Those sentences are particularly amusing in which every word and phrase are thoroughly intelligible but the meaning is equally obscure: "In consideration of everything and that it was done by them as it must be left to them with this as an agreement"; or "The envelopes are on all the fruit trees". Or again Saint Ignatius: "Left when there was precious little to be asked by the ones who overwhelmingly particular about what they were adding to themselves by means of their arrangements which might be why they went away and came again".

Such unusual constellations of words are particularly telling in combination with Thomson's music, which is direct, basically simple and accessible. One

does not rock with laughter seeing *Four Saints*, but one is delightfully amused and has an evening of real enjoyment. And although at the end of the performance one does not know exactly what has transpired on the stage, one leaves the theatre with the feeling that one has experienced a piece that has meaning and has seen a stage work with beginning, middle and end.

Gertrude Stein was no Dadaist, and she bears only a superficial relation to the many so-called "advanced" poets and writers who in the 1920s wrote undisciplined nonsense in a "modern" style and pawned off a garbled jargon of uncontrolled words and phrases under the guise of literature. Stein was a pioneer in renewing the English language; as early as 1914 she published a book of poems, *Tender Buttons*, in which traditional usage and syntax were dissolved. In many respects she can be compared with another great destroyer and re-builder of English, James Joyce, and she was considerably earlier in the field. *Tender Buttons* appeared in the same year as Joyce's *Dubliners*, a work that is still somewhat in the French tradition of the nineteenth century. *Ulysses* was not published until 1922.

Although Stein possessed neither the creative power nor the spiritual depth of a Joyce, she was nevertheless a serious artist whose experiments sprang from inner necessity and not, as in some instances, from a desire to create a sensation. She had a highly developed feeling for style and for words, and a keen wit. Her writings and her personality exercised a strong influence on the generation of American writers between 1915 and 1925—Hemingway, Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings and others. They subsequently went their separate ways, but not before learning a great deal from Stein.

The *scenario* of *Four Saints* was devised and developed after the text and music had been completed. It is largely the work of Maurice Grosser, although both Stein and Thomson took part in its development. Grosser himself offers the following explanation of the work:

"*Four Saints in Three Acts* is both an opera and a choreographic spectacle. Imaginary but characteristic incidents from the lives of the saints constitute its action. Its scene is laid in sixteenth-century Spain. Its principal characters are Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Ignatius Loyola, and their respective confidants, Saint Settlement and Saint Chavez—both of these last without historical prototypes. These are the four saints referred to in the title. Other characters are a *Compère* and *Commère*, a small chorus of named saints—Saint Pilar, Saint Ferdinand and others—and a larger chorus of unnamed saints. Saint Teresa, for reasons of musical convenience, is represented by two singers dressed exactly alike. This device of the composer has no hidden significance and is not anywhere indicated in the poet's text, though Miss Stein found it thoroughly acceptable. The *Compère* and *Commère*, who speak to the audience and to each other about the progress of the opera, have also, as characters, been introduced by the composer. . . . One should not try to interpret too literally the words of this opera, nor should one fall into the opposite error of thinking they mean nothing at all. On the contrary, they mean many things at once. . . ."

In addition to the characters mentioned, three male and three female dancers play an important part and lend much colour and movement to the spectacle. In the original production (1934), as well as in the recent revival (1952) on Broadway, the entire cast was composed of negroes. The composer states that this is by no means obligatory but that he chose negroes principally



because of their clear English diction and because of their naturalness in approaching religious themes.

The action of *Four Saints* develops no "plot" in the usual sense, and the climaxes, the existence of which is nevertheless undeniable, are chiefly of a musical nature. Act I, for instance, takes place in Avila and "represents a pageant, or Sunday School entertainment, on the steps of the cathedral. Saint Teresa enacts for the instruction of saints and visitors scenes from her own saintly life". These include Saint Teresa painting giant Easter eggs, being photographed by Saint Settlement, being serenaded by Saint Ignatius, receiving flowers, and the like. Act II represents a garden party in the country near Barcelona. There is a charming dance of angels, games, refreshments, toasts, and an impressive vision of a heavenly mansion, during which the saints "kneel, wonder and rejoice". Act III takes place in the garden of a monastery on the seacoast. Men saints are mending fishing nets. Saint Ignatius describes his vision of the Holy Ghost in his famous *aria* "Pigeons on the Grass". A Spanish dance is executed by sailors and young girls to a very un-saintly tango. Saint Ignatius predicts the last judgment and it gets dark. A procession of saints enters slowly to dirge-like music on the text "Letting pin in letting let, in let in in in in let, in let in wet, in wed in dead, in dead wed led", etc. The mood brightens gradually with the singing of hymns. Act IV shows all the saints reassembled in heaven, singing of happy times on earth.

Thomson's music has little or nothing to do with either Spain or the sixteenth century. Its principal source is the American hymn-tune of the nineteenth century, a simple, naive, often banal kind of music with which the composer grew up. The incongruity between this music on the one hand and the text of Stein and the Spanish setting on the other is thoroughly delightful, and Thomson has exploited and managed these incongruities with a fine hand. The seemingly naive score is in fact extremely skilful and sophisticated. The harmonies are essentially simple, even primitive; the ways in which they are manipulated, however, are refined—the rhythmic procedures no less so. The opening bars, with a rhythm of four superimposed on one of three, is a case in point:

## Ex. 1

Allegro maestoso (♩. 120) sostenuto

Chorus I

To know to know to love her so — Four

Curtain I

Allegro maestoso (♩. 120) cresc. molto

Accomp.

Snare Drum pp simile

saints pre- pare for saints. It makes it well fish Four saints it makes it well fish Four

saints pre- pare for saints it makes it well well fish it makes it well fish pre- pare for

*m.s.*

Copyright, 1940, by Virgil Thomson

In the chanted passages, many of which recall the practices of mediaeval psalmody, Thomson's uncanny feeling for prosody and for finding the just declamation of English is apparent, as it is indeed throughout the entire opera:

**Ex. 2**

Compère (*spoken*)      Commère

In i- die acts. He made ve-ry much more than he did he did make ve-ry much of it he did not

*pp*

*spoken*

on- ly add to his part of it but and with it he was at and in a plight

Cymb. *p*

In striking contrast to such declaimed and recitative-like passages are those which derive from the American tradition of nineteenth-century hymnody and which give *Four Saints* its special flavour. These simple tunes of the baptist

and methodist churches are entirely unpretentious, frequently sentimental and cloying, geared, so to speak, to the lowest musical intelligence—strictly *Gebrauchsmusik*, designed to turn a pioneer population to religion. In conjunction with Stein's neutral texts they produce a most unusual effect that is close to parody. Whether Thomson uses existing hymns or invents melodies in this vein is of little import; such passages as this create the authentic atmosphere of a baptist Sunday school:

**Ex. 3**

Andante (♩ = 72)

St. Teresa I

Begin to trace begin to race begin to place begin and in in that that

is why this is what is left as may may follows June and June follows moon and moon follows

Or again the trio in the first act:

**Ex. 4**

Allegretto (♩ = 108)

St. Teresa I

They nev-er knew a-bout it green and they nev-er knew a-bout it

They nev-er knew a-bout it green and they

They nev-er knew a-bout it green they nev-er knew a-bout it

she nev-er knew a-bout it they nev-er knew a-bout it they nev-er knew a-bout it

nev-er knew a-bout it they they and

she nev-er knew a-bout it they nev-er knew a-bout it they nev-er knew a-bout it

This "Sunday school atmosphere", which might also be described as "the atmosphere of the harmonium" runs through *Four Saints* in more or less obvious forms from beginning to end, giving the work its thoroughly American character. At the same time the entire piece might well be considered a parody of nineteenth-century opera, particularly Italian opera. But the parody is so skilfully and discreetly carried out that it can pass unnoticed. And neither the parodistic character of the work nor its distinctly American heritage obscures the personal style that is definitely Virgil Thomson's. It is an amusing opera, and it is also much more than that. Like the text on which it is written, it is entertaining and at the same time a work of art. In a sense it can be judged only by itself, for there is no other work like it.

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## John Dunstable

BY

WYN K. FORD

To commemorate the quincentenary of Dunstable's death, which occurred on 24th December, 1953, the first complete edition of his extant works, issued as Volume VIII of the series *Musica Britannica*, was published in January, sponsored jointly by the Royal Musical Association and the American Musicological Society. A number of his works had appeared already, notably in the volumes of the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*; a few were transcribed in the second volume of *Early English Harmony*, pp. 116 ff., and the editor stated that two motets, printed on pp. 38 and 51 of the complete edition, had proved insoluble. The new complete edition is, however, long overdue, and is to be welcomed as a monument of English mediaeval music. The name of the editor is sufficient earnest of the reliability of the edition; Professor Bukofzer has long been recognized as a competent scholar in this field. He has not elected to give an extended introduction to the volume, but the information given in the preface is supplemented by his article "John Dunstable: a quincentenary report" in the January, 1954, issue of *The Musical Quarterly*.

The date of Dunstable's birth is not known, but various dates from c. 1370 to c. 1390 have been suggested. Mr. Barclay Squire stated in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that he was born at Dunstable, but he did not repeat the assertion in *Grove*, stating that there was no authority for it. Practically nothing is known of his life; it has proved impossible as yet to identify him with any other man of this name of whom we have information.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, an inscription on an astronomical treatise at St. John's College, Cambridge, which has led to the conclusion that he was in Holy Orders and that he was in the service of the Duke of Bedford in France.<sup>2</sup> There is no other evidence to support this supposition, but it helps to clarify the continental interest in Dunstable's musical work.<sup>3</sup> It is evident that a number of craftsmen followed the Duke to France,<sup>4</sup> but the present writer ventures to wonder if the assumption that the Cambridge inscription is literally correct is justified. Pyamour, who is named as one of the retinue of the Duke in France,<sup>5</sup> was also the lay Master of the Choristers in the Chapel Royal in 1418-9, at the time when it was itself in France.<sup>6</sup> The Chapel Royal at Windsor included in its complement at this period both priest-vicars and lay clerks.<sup>7</sup> If Dunstable was himself in Holy Orders at this time of his life, this might account for the omission of his name in the records of the Chapel, and the presence of that body in France might account for the statement that Dunstable was a musician to the Duke of Bedford. It has been suggested that Dunstable devoted himself to the study of astronomy and mathematics after he returned to England, presumably by 1430;<sup>8</sup> indeed, an astronomical treatise inscribed "*de manu Dunstapli*" has been dated 1438.<sup>9</sup> The Cambridge MS doubtless comes from this period, when he had attained the dignity of "*canonicus*".

The matter of continental influence on Dunstable's music appears to be debatable. Professor Bukofzer has pointed out<sup>10</sup> that the plainsong melodies used by Dunstable were taken from the Sarum service books. A few remarks on the subject of liturgical variations

<sup>1</sup> For some possibilities, see *Grove*, II.110 and Harvey, *Gothic England*, pp. 88-9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*, p. 412.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bukofzer in *Mus. Quart.*, XL.30.

<sup>4</sup> Coulton, *Art and the Reformation*, pp. 234-5.

<sup>5</sup> Bukofzer, *loc. cit.*; Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>6</sup> Roper, "Music at the English Chapels Royal", *Proc. Mus. Assoc.*, LIV.21-2; Harvey, *loc. cit.* It seems likely that Dunstable was a member of the Chapel Royal, as Cornyshe and Fayrfax were later.

<sup>7</sup> Hughes, "Music in the Chapel of Henry VI", *P.M.A.*, LX.27.

<sup>8</sup> Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 89. Cf. *Grove*, II.112.

<sup>9</sup> *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, s.v. "Dunstable". Cf. *Grove*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *M.Q.*, XL.38 and Preface, *Coll. Wks.*, p. xiv.

will be made below; it is sufficient now to remark that this point indicates that there was no very profound influence from that quarter during the period when he was writing his liturgical music. The frequency of the occurrence of Dunstable's compositions in continental MSS and their almost total absence in British sources have been commented upon, but it should be pointed out<sup>11</sup> that a quarter of the composers named in the Old Hall MS are named in continental sources. And is it not possible that MSS containing Dunstable's compositions suffered at the dissolution of the monasteries more complete destruction than those containing compositions by other English composers? On the other hand, it is probable that English musicians serving in France at that time came under the spell of continental influences to a greater or less extent; exchange of technique in musical composition is traceable in music of earlier times.<sup>12</sup> It may be that Dunstable's one setting of the *Kyrie* in the Ordinary of the Mass is a relic of continental influence; unlike those of the Elizabethan era, English composers were content to let stand the traditional plainsong of this section at this period.<sup>13</sup> In a later MS at York containing six settings of the Mass, there are only four settings of the *Kyrie*, and only one of these is complete.<sup>14</sup>

The period at which Dunstable lived was an age of transition from the golden period of the Middle Ages to the Reformation. The great schism in the Papacy and the consequent series of councils which took place in Dunstable's lifetime must have forced the laity to question the infallibility of the Pope, at least in their own minds;<sup>15</sup> indeed, there had been for a long time cries for reform and literary arguments against the Papacy.<sup>16</sup> From the thirteenth century onwards there had been a gradual decline from the spiritual ideals of earlier times, and the writings of the heresiarch Wyclif mark the end of the age of scholasticism,<sup>17</sup> although they were included by implication in the condemnation of Hus at the Council of Constance (1414-9),<sup>18</sup> at which council, indeed, the presence of a reforming party showed the trend of contemporary feeling, although Hus' appeal to the Scriptures against ecclesiastical tradition did not save him from the flames. On the political side, the conflict between Emperor and Pope, of which an example is the struggle between Ludwig of Bavaria and the Papacy,<sup>19</sup> and the increasingly materialistic outlook of the Church showed that all was not well with that body which had previously directed the cultural forces of the western world.

England was in a position somewhat different from the rest of the Pope's spiritual dominions. Although the Church achieved a measure of power, the sovereign, and the secular authorities always had to be reckoned with. On the social side, the series of outbreaks of disease which occurred in the fourteenth century had given rise to an unprecedented state of affairs which was to last for a century: there occurred a shortage of labour which placed the peasants in an advantageous position, and which gave rise, on the one hand, to the Peasants' Revolt and, on the other, to the doctrines of Wyclif and his adherents; indeed, the parish priests often augmented their livelihood, in the absence of taxation, by assuming secular duties offered them by landlords.<sup>20</sup> The Lollards early obtained and, to a certain extent, retained the support of certain members of the aristocracy, as is clearly shown by the revolts of Oldcastle and of Cobham (1416, 1414), in spite of the injunction of their founder to poverty, which was observed by priests of the sect. Rich and poor alike suffered at the stake, and, even after the patronage of the rich was withdrawn, the movement continued to spread in face of the implementation of the edict "*De Haeretico Comburendo*" (1401), although the movement was not concerned

<sup>11</sup> Hughes, *loc. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> For examples, cf. Reese, *op. cit.*, pp. 395, 405, 416.

<sup>13</sup> Hughes, *loc. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Mus. & Letters*, XXXV.25.

<sup>15</sup> Binns, *Decline and Fall of the Mediaeval Papacy*, pp. 148 ff.; Mackinnon, *Origins of the Reformation*, pp. 140-52, etc.; Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, IV.45-58 etc.

<sup>16</sup> Coulton, *op. cit.*, IV.34 ff.; Mackinnon, pp. 53-69.

<sup>17</sup> Mackinnon, pp. 80-127, has an account.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-8.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Powicke, *Reformation in England*, pp. 1-3, 9-15.

<sup>20</sup> Trevelyan, *Eng. Social History*, p. 62.



with social revolt.<sup>21</sup> The Wars of the Roses, which, it has been suggested,<sup>22</sup> may have been responsible for the neglect of Dunstable's music in this country, rendered uncertain the government of the country and the ownership of land; the former element consisted of a number of conflicts, with each side victorious in turn, the latter was a reign of lawless violence amongst the landowners themselves.<sup>23</sup> In the circumstances perhaps it is not surprising that art did not flourish.<sup>24</sup> Letters and architecture were less inspired than previously,<sup>25</sup> but the age produced the Old Hall MS, apparently written by members of the Chapel Royal, and other music besides Dunstable's. The *Renaissance* had already begun.

We now return to a point touched on above. Professor Bukofzer, in his preface to Dunstable's works (p. xiv), refers to the differences between the Sarum and the "Roman melodies". This last expression may mislead those unacquainted with mediaeval liturgical practices to think that there is some essential difference between the use of Sarum and the normal Roman rite; this would be incorrect. The Roman liturgy itself was not used universally until about the twelfth century, and thereafter local variants, or "uses" of the definitive Roman rite began to appear in all parts of the West which owed allegiance to the Pope: Dr. Fortescue<sup>26</sup> has suggested that these uses are analogous to linguistic dialects. No liturgy had been officially promulgated between that of Gregory the Great and the bull of Pius V (1570) which enjoined the universal use of the Roman rite,<sup>27</sup> and the individual bishops were left to adapt the central rite to the needs of their own dioceses. Such variations occurred in the kalendar (and the relevant collects) and the music, which was usually more ornate and more abundant; but the essential character of the rite was left unaltered,<sup>28</sup> although there was an interchange of observances between the various dioceses.<sup>29</sup> The individual celebrant was not compelled to follow his missal literally, it seems; the practice of improvisation in liturgical performance is very ancient. Thus the employment by Dunstable of melodies from the Sarum use implies that he wrote his music for performance in the area using the Sarum use, and would seem to suggest that he actually wrote the music there.

Professor Bukofzer has dealt fully with the significance of Dunstable and with the opinions of subsequent writers (including the "Dunstable legend") in the article to which we have already referred; it will suffice to make a few comments here. Davey<sup>30</sup> asserts that "Dunstable had a European reputation in 1420-30", but he gives no authority for the statement, and it may be disregarded. In any case, it appears that Dunstable's importance is of quite a different kind from what Davey and others had supposed; it is now thought, for instance, that *faux bourdon* itself was of Flemish origin,<sup>31</sup> and Bukofzer's treatment of the matter is very different from that of so sober a scholar as Walker.<sup>32</sup> Dunstable has more examples surviving of the seven types of composition that Bukofzer has found,<sup>33</sup> and his works were the best examples of English harmonic style for continental imitation. Nevertheless, it seems that there is frequent confusion in the MS sources between Dunstable and another prominent member of the English school, Leonel Power,<sup>34</sup> and one is inclined to wonder if this confusion has extended elsewhere—to the various laudatory references, for instance;<sup>35</sup> it appears from Schrade's survey of musical

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, *England in the Age of Wyclif*, pp. 333 ff.; *Dict. Eng. Church History*, s.v. "Lollards".

<sup>22</sup> *D.N.B.*

<sup>23</sup> Trevelyan, *Eng. Soc. Hist.*, pp. 58-61.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Harvey's chapter, "The Great Slump".

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Coulton, *Art & Ref.*, c. XII, for a picture of the times.

<sup>26</sup> Fortescue, *The Mass*, p. 201.

<sup>27</sup> Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 586.

<sup>28</sup> Fortescue, pp. 202-4.

<sup>29</sup> Dix, pp. 585 ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Hist. of Eng. Music*, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Bukofzer, "Fauxbourdon revisited", *MQ*.XXXVIII.22 ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Hist. Music in England*, pp. 15 ff.

<sup>33</sup> *P.M.A.*, LXV.19 ff.

<sup>34</sup> *MQ*, XL.39 ff.

<sup>35</sup> Some are in Davey, pp. 57-9.

treatises of this period<sup>36</sup> that these allusions are a trifle haphazard. Moreover, this may be the explanation of the curious "Dunstable" quotation, for which no other source has yet been found, recorded (with scorn) in Morley's *Plain & Easy Introduction*;<sup>37</sup> the extract may not be Dunstable's, but may be misattributed to him, either deliberately—for the sake of the pun—or accidentally—as the foremost representative of the school (or period) from which it was taken.

As in other volumes of the series, the *Complete Works of John Dunstable* contains editorial notes, which give a *resumé* of the methods adopted in transcription, and a series of eight full-page facsimiles, which, for the most part, give an adequate impression of the notation employed in the sources, although it appears that there are a number of blemishes on the plates reproduced; to these latter may be added as reproductions of source material one facsimile in the editor's recent article in *The Musical Quarterly* and another reproduced as the frontispiece to Volume LXV of the *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*. The editor also has given at the close of the volume the originals of the plain-song melodies used by Dunstable, which are valuable for the adequate study of the music, a list of sources, with references to literature descriptive of them, a critical commentary and a list of titles of the compositions in alphabetical order in addition to the list of contents at the front of the volume; it is unfortunate that this last contains references by item number only, and not by page numbers.

## Oscar Straus

BY

HANS KELLER

WITH the death on 11th January of Oscar Straus, the composer of *Ein Walzertraum* (*Waltz Dream*), *Der tapfere Soldat* (*The Chocolate Soldier*—not *The Brave Soldier*, as *The Times* of 12th January has it, believing it to be a different work from the Shaw operetta!), *Der letzte Walzer* (*Last Waltz*) and so (or rather always differently) on, our critical brotherhood has become dimly aware of his significance, and *The Musical Times* of March even featured an article on "Götterdämmerung in Wien: The Passing of Viennese Operetta" which, however, did not tell us anything about Straus and, in fact, hardly distinguished between good and bad. Both the recent obituaries (e.g. *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *News Chronicle*) and previously, on the musicological side, Dr. Dika Newlin (*Bruckner-Mahler-Schoenberg*, New York, 1947) have failed to characterize and evaluate his music; "true", she says, "the operetta is far inferior to the *Singspiel*, mainly on account of the commercialization which it underwent at the hands of composers like Franz Lehár and Oscar Straus". I have had the pleasure of enjoying Dr. Newlin's perspicacity in private exchanges of critical opinion, whence I am convinced that if she compared many *Singspiele* with most Straus operettas, she would immediately revise her judgment. Besides, she might have asked her teacher (Arnold Schönberg) about it all: if the dates of my sources are correct, Straus must have been one of Schönberg's bosses on the Berlin *Überbrettel*, though his music could not have been amongst the stuff Schönberg orchestrated, for with a thorough training and an impressive list of "serious" *opus* numbers behind him, Straus could very well deal with this aspect of composition himself. In any case, his first operetta seems to date from 1904, starting an original and partly satirical train of musical events which our critics have tended to associate with the waltz-Strausses, even though some of his best music is in duple or quadruple time, and despite the fact that his later operettas introduce the fox trot (including the Shimmy variety) into their *genre*, thus

<sup>36</sup> In *Monteverdi*, pp. 21 ff.

<sup>37</sup> Ed. Harman, p. 291.

repaying the compliment which, in the twenties, jazz was paying to Viennese operetta (Sigmund Romberg, Jerome Kern). To be sure, his name caused a "Strauss" identification in his own mind, and a considerable section of his work leaves no doubt about the fact that he liked to imagine himself as another waltz king (the primitive motto waltz of *La Ronde* is not a good example, but "Come! Come! I love you only . . ." is—both of how he wished to be a Strauss and how he wasn't). In *Three Waltzes*, in fact, his father-identification went so far as to make him precede his own third act by two acts of Johann Straussian music, both the father's and the son's.

Viennese he was indeed, but—and this is a point which has been universally missed—he was a Jew. As soon as someone throws augmented seconds between the third and fourth and the sixth and seventh degrees of the scale, we murmur something about Jewish elements, but though Straus' name is not even mentioned in either the German original or the drastically revised English translation of Aron Marko Rothmüller's *Die Musik der Juden*,\* his music is unmistakably Jewish. I am not practising racial theory, but merely group psychology, when I submit that his work exhibits that complex kind of cleverness, skill, and wit in the widest sense, which most Jewish composers, if they are composers at all, manifest in one form or another, and for which I know no other word, in any language, than the Hebrew and Yiddish word TAM.

With TAM, Straus took his light music seriously and his serious music lightly, and in his ability to combine a musician's heart with a commercial nose, he was second only to Gershwin, with whom he shared his elegance, his cheerfully oedipal sentimentality and nostalgia—the oedipus complex was discovered by a Jew—and an ever watchful, spontaneous intelligence which helped to create the positive counterpart of *Kitsch*. At the same time, Gershwin was not too far removed from his field of musical action, but there are other Jewish composers, entirely different in approach, style and ideas, to whom he is nevertheless related in some essential and distinguishing character trait; his satire, for instance, has the same source as Mahler's or Schönberg's musical irony.

Fur-coated and cigared, he used to be addressed as "Meister"—not the "Master" we capitalize when we poke fun at the German's not altogether funny humility in the face of genius, but the "master" of the Jewish-Viennese coffee-house, a form of address with just a tinge of ironical ambivalence which expresses both respect for, and (by ironical inversion) familiarity with someone who has mastered an artistic or intellectual job and got on in the world. As a member of a far younger generation, I am particularly glad that we paid tribute to the "master" while he was still alive (*First Performances*, MR, X/3, August, 1949), and I do not hesitate now to take leave of him by withdrawing the inverted commas, for a master at his job he was, and although his tunes are by no means eternal, they (and their musical treatment) will be distinctly remembered when many a proud pet of our international societies of temporary music is forgotten.

## First Performances

### THEIR PRE- AND REVIEWS

COMPILED BY HANS KELLER, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DONALD MITCHELL AND H. C. ROBBINS LONDON

A WELL-REMEMBERED part of my childhood was spent in more or less successful attempts to evade the strains of Marschner in search of something better—not the ideal background, one might say, for an unprejudiced approach to the British *première* of *Hans Heiling*, whose review I am therefore passing on to another. I shall confine my rôle to that of a malicious second speaker.

\* Review of German version: MR, XIII/4, Nov., 1952; review of English version forthcoming.

Donald Mitchell writes:—What was probably Heinrich Marschner's (1795–1861) most important opera took just one hundred and twenty years to achieve its first English performance on the stage of the Oxford Town Hall, on 2nd December, 1953. The piece was done by the Oxford University Opera Club. A rather too literal translation of Eduard Devrient's *libretto* was the work of Peter Branscombe.

The central dramatic situation results from the chagrin of the Demon King of the Underworld who found himself, as it were, unable to marry above his station. For this conflict between the spheres of the Under- and Overground, Marschner provided music often apt and sometimes striking. If, however, both the supernatural elements and the lusty, leafy life of the forest were acceptably conveyed—summoning up packs of goblins or carousing peasants evidently summoned up the best that was in Marschner—the intervening *arias*, duets and *ensembles* which sustained the opera's domestic and personal relationships rarely rose above a level of p(leasant competence. Marschner had a very real gift for evoking a mood of terror or mysterious alarm, but his powers of characterization were weak in the extreme; and having recognized his success with semi-black magic and lumpish jollity, what remains to compel our attention? While we must be grateful to the Opera Club for bringing what (to English musicians) has been an hitherto untested historical judgment to operatic life, this performance of *Heiling* did no more than confirm the text-book estimate of Marschner as a composer of singular historical importance, and quite failed to disclose any substantial musical basis for a genuine rousing of interest in his operas. In the end, it is inspired genius which counts, not historical significance; and although Marschner must always command the eye of the historian, there seems, on the evidence of *Hans Heiling*, to be no vital reason why his music should further engage our ears. Premonitions there are—not only of Wagner, but of Richard Strauss and Mahler—but they are far outweighed by postmonitions of Gluck, Weber, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and even Rossini. In the midst of this wide-ranging eclecticism which, now and again, and almost by accident, touches upon the future, there is barely a sign of an authentically personal idiom. When one has paid tribute to the originality of Marschner's instrumentation, to the remarkable continuity of the Prologue's structure, and to the memorable character of Gertrud's spinning song and Heiling's melodrama, Marschner has been given his due. Perhaps more than his due. For unlike many another composer's premonitions or innovations, Marschner's are of no great value in themselves; they assume significance (history again!) because we listen to them retrospectively. We read into them, so to speak, some of the creative genius with which they have been endowed by later composers. Should we, I wonder, be detained for a moment by the precursory features of Marschner's style if we did not have the inestimable advantage of knowing what his successors made of them?

D. M.

We shouldn't be detained in any case, and I for one am most ungrateful to the Oxford University Opera Club. It is a matter of principle and policy. Whoever wants to ascertain the historical rôle of *Hans Heiling* can study the score; he won't learn anything more from a performance. Historicism is the danger of our age which, after all, is producing some music (including some producible operas) of its own. We want bad new pieces instead of mediocre old ones. The former may help us creatively, the latter have lost their function. We have to decide whether we want to be performing librarians or artists. As for the work itself, I wish to add Mozart's and Schubert's names (*Requiem*, "Trout" Quintet, C major Symphony, "*Ich schnitt es gern in alle Rinden ein*") to Mitchell's list, and the first act's second trio to his objects of qualified praise.

Upon a semi-private occasion which shall therefore remain dateless, Robert Donington and his colleagues gave what was probably the first English performance of a weak G minor trio Sonata by Gluck, which he had satisfactorily edited for the purpose. Its 3-movement structure is the same as that of Gluck's other trio sonatas, except that a rather surprising gigue-like affair turns up as middle movement, before the concluding minuet. According to Einstein, this set of six trio sonatas (of which the present work is the second), with a seventh preserved in MS, is Gluck's only wholly instrumental work, but *Grove* III and IV

list two published sets, one of seven and one of six. This is wrong in any case, because there is no published set of seven. I suspect, moreover, that there is no second set either, and that *Grove* counted the same set twice: *in toto* it is a set of seven, but as published (November, 1746) it is a set of six. As far as I can see, the Gluck literature offers no further enlightenment; I also approached Martin Cooper personally, but he could not solve the mystery. Perhaps *Grove V*, forthcoming, will improve the bibliographical situation.

Another weak G minor trio Sonata, for oboe and violin, said to be by Handel, was given its "second modern performance" by the London Music Group on 15th December. It had been edited by Marilyn Wailes who found it the year before at Agen in France, "it" not being the autograph. "But there seems no reason", the programme note added cheerfully, "to doubt its authenticity and it is attributed to 'Sign. Haendel' by a contemporary transcriber". In point of fact there is every musical reason to doubt its authenticity, for neither its structure nor its style shows any of the highly characteristic features of Handel's masterly trio sonatas (which are superior to Bach's), and both musically and historically it is much more primitive than anything one could, on internal evidence, attribute to Handel. In his review of the recital, Scott Goddard (*News Chronicle*, 16th December) gracefully departed from the scene where the music critic should come in: he talked about "an engaging work, both short and sweet", without touching the question whether it had a composer. The MS comes from the Duc d'Aiguillon's library.

The "first performance in England of the complete and original version" of Bach's *Magnificat* (in E $\flat$ ) was presented by the London Bach Group on 22nd December. My speedy escape from this row makes it impossible for me to comment on the first version of the work to which, in the circumstances, I should have preferred a piano arrangement. On the question of E $\flat$  versus D, however, I should like to make the modest comment that low chamber pitch or no, you don't only tune a key up or down a semitone, but also, to an essential degree, its character (colour). In general, I find it amazing how worried people without absolute pitch can become about keys; but when a critic uses his own sense of pitch for the purpose of describing a key-structure, they think he is showing off.

On 6th January, the Haydn Orchestra thought they gave "probably the first public performance in England" of the master's somewhat unmasterly Symphony no. 66 in B flat. H. C. Robbins Landon writes that he does not believe in this probability: the work was printed by William Forster in London about 1792 and was certainly performed then, probably in Haydn's presence. The print in question is in the Henry Watson Library at Manchester and is entitled "No. 2 from op. 15, a favourite sinfonia for a grand orchestre (sic). Performed at the professional and other concerts. [Our italics.] London Will<sup>m</sup>. Forster". (Plate no. 125.) Rosemary Hughes, the programme noter, did not seem to know the print. The Hummel print of nos. 67, 66 and 68 (c. 1779), moreover (which Burney knew: he arranged no. 67 for harpsichord), was known in England, and copies from the eighteenth century are to be found. Rosemary Hughes puts the date of composition "about half-way between the creative outburst of the early 1770's . . . and . . . [Haydn's] encounter with Mozart"; Landon thinks we may be more exact: the Haydn Society Gesamtausgabe has c. 1778/9, which is probably correct. One of the parts in the Esterházy archives in Budapest, incidentally, bears the curious inscription "*Betet für die Gefangenen*" (Pray for the prisoners); Landon thinks this may perhaps be a whimsical remark that Haydn made at a rehearsal or something of the sort. As for the work itself, Landon has a fascinating theory on the de- and envelopment and re-development of Haydn's creativity in chapter X of his forthcoming book, *The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn*, and I propose to postpone my own discussion of the work until the book is available, in order to be able to examine my impressions against Landon's interpretation.

The first English performance (LSO, 8th November) of Richard Strauss' Symphonic Fragment *The Legend of Joseph* (1914) disclosed an uneven, but partly superb ballet suite in G major with a highly original, chromatic violin solo (quick scales) in the prelude, surprisingly Mendelssohnian clarinet solos with strings nearer the middle, and a typical and well-known Strauss cadence to end it all. The clarinet solos are followed by a boring, long flute solo with *cadenza*, a better march and a weakish, thematic *sciliana*. The



texture is masterly throughout. Scott Goddard's programme note contained this excellent passage:—

By changing Joseph's age from young manhood to boyhood Hofmannsthal and Kessler heightened the erotic character of the scenario. It was perhaps unfair on Potiphar's wife thus to widen the gap between her age and his. In *Genesis* she is simply a rather nasty type. Here she is a character taken from the case-book of a pathologist, the same doctor who had analysed Klytemnestra a few years before in preparation for her appearance in Strauss' *Elektra*.

Martin Cooper (*Daily Telegraph*, 9th November), on the other hand, used one of those glib newspaper phrases:—

This, written for Diaghilev in 1914, adds nothing to Strauss' stature.

—which don't mean anything whatsoever, because the question was not whether it added anything to Strauss' stature, nor did anybody expect it to do so.

On 27th October, the Liszt Society offered the first performance of Liszt's *Hungarian March* in B♭ minor (1840), the first of two unpublished Hungarian pieces which are to appear in the forthcoming Liszt Society Publications, volume III. More original and more Hungarian in the trio than in the principal section, the work would be performable without the concluding bars by Louis Kentner, which are ridiculous. He is mistaken if he thinks that he supplied any kind of end at all; thematically empty and full of over-virtuosity (which makes you realize that Liszt's own apparent over-virtuosity is really nothing of the sort), his effort lands on an unmotivated open B♭ which intensifies a misleading impression of the dominant of E♭, while as regards rhythmic structure the thing is too short. Something must be done about the missing bars before the march is published; I cannot understand how the Liszt Society could pass Kentner's flight of imagination for performance. *The Times* did not notice anything amiss.

## Film Music and Beyond

### TALES FROM THE VIENNA HOLLYWOODS

WHAT is the *St. Matthew Passion*? I don't think the reader's scholarship will be up to this question. "*St. Matthew Passion*", according to a definition which I have before me in black and white, "is the first screen version of one of the greatest works in the musical repertoire, a work that has for centuries drawn large crowds whenever it has been performed in churches or concert halls". How long is the *St. Matthew Passion*? Not long, don't worry. One hour and twenty minutes, to be exact. It consists of a free and easy series of tales, with a spot of music in between. Who is responsible for *St. Matthew Passion*—one of California's great musical directors? No, the "Musical Director" is Herbert von Karajan, with Ernst Marischka producing and directing, and Hans Schedelmann and Walter Legge acting as "Artistic Consultants" (*sic*). The English version is by Robert J. Flaherty, the orchestra the Vienna Philharmonic, the soloists Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Elisabeth Höngen, Karl Schmitt-Walter, Walter Ludwig and Hans Braun, and the choral aspect is dealt with by what the synopsis calls "The Choir of the Vienna Singverein" and "The Vienna Choirboys" (meaning the *Sängerknaben*). The film company is Erna Film, Vienna.

How is *St. Matthew Passion*? It couldn't be better. "It can be said without exaggeration that the film version comes as near a perfect performance of this great work as is humanly possible." The Trade Show took place on 8th March in filmland's cultural centre, the Academy Cinema, which, almost exactly a year before, had introduced us to Gian Carlo Menotti's *Medium* film. At the time, we implied in the present feature (May, 1953) that nothing more symptomatic could befall our decaying culture. We were mistaken, and with apologies to Mr. Menotti we turn to Mr. Karajan and his accomplices.



## (a) THE PRINCIPLE

"... the film is illustrated with scenes from the life of Christ, as depicted by artists from the great centuries of European painting [*i.e.* fifteenth- sixteenth- and seventeenth-century painters]. Its illuminating pictorial commentary and the perfect audibility of the text make this the perfect introduction to one of the masterpieces of our musical heritage, and many who know the work intimately will discover new and unsuspected beauties in the film version". A devitalized culture which has ceased to understand its own creations tends to explain one art in terms of another; hence the popularity of the ballet, Disney's *Fantasia*, "Cultural Histories" galore, and *St. Matthew Passion*. To juxtapose self-contained works of art is to establish a meaningless relation between what is meaningful, in a desperate and vain attempt to recover the lost meaning, "new and unsuspected beauties". "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . ."\* discloses a new, though nowise unsuspected meaning. But let us be fair; our artistic world could be less stupid if it did not consider it its solemn duty to address itself to the stupid; thou shalt confine thy film versions to what is in the earth beneath, as distinct from what is in heaven above or in the water under the earth.

## (b) THE MUSICAL DERANGEMENT

Given the absurd time-limit of 1 hour 20 minutes, no more complete destruction of the musico-dramatic build-up can be imagined. It is the final and definitive film version. After "Then assembled the chief priests" there is a cut of a mere nine numbers; we come in again at "Where wilt Thou". But more humorous events are to follow. I must ask the reader to realize that he is not perusing a misprinted sentence when I say that the *arioso*, "Although both heart and eyes o'erflow", is retained, while the subsequent *aria*, "Lord, to Thee", is omitted. The whole function of the *arioso* is, of course, to lead up to the *aria* with which it is intimately connected. Instead, we hear, after a cut of four further numbers, the recitative, no. 24: "Then cometh Jesus with them". After the next two numbers, our Musical Director considers that the time is ripe for the first *aria* to appear: "I would beside my Lord". The next thing we are confronted with in Karajan's sweeping panorama is "And He came to His disciples". Yet our Director is only just getting into his stride, for after we have been allowed a spot of the recitative no. 32 (latter half), we are plunged into the middle of no. 33, *i.e.* "Have lightnings and thunders", for good music must surely be able to make its impact without its structure. A further spot of recitative lands us, like an aeroplane, somewhere in Part II, and just as we realize that this must be no. 37, we hear no. 40, *i.e.* the *arioso* "He holds His peace", whereupon the hide-and-seek game is repeated: the ensuing *aria* is cut! Now we are really getting somewhere; in fact, the end is in sight. Instead of the *aria* that is supposed to grow out of the *arioso* we savour the recitative of no. 42 and are, moreover, allowed a bit of choral music since it is short. Even "Have mercy, Lord, on me" is included, because the violin solo is popular and because you must give Höngen a chance. After no. 49, three numbers are cut, so that we arrive once more at a recitative. Hide-and-seek has meanwhile developed into an artistic principle: the *arioso* no. 57 is in, the *aria* out. No. 59 is cut off after "Let Him be crucified!" in order (never mind the harmony) to make room for the recitativic sentence before "O gracious God". By now we have learnt to appreciate that since this *arioso* is included, its *aria* must be excluded, and the same principle is applied to "Ah Golgatha!" and its own *aria*. The rest can be imagined.

## (c) THE PERFORMANCE

With occasional exceptions on the part of Höngen and Schwarzkopf, the interpretation can only be described as utterly unmusical. If Mr. Karajan and his Artistic Consultants want details, they can have them.

\* Which, incidentally, may be said to denote the central problem of Schönberg's opera *Moses und Aron* (first performed by the Nordwestdeutsche Rundfunk at the Hamburger Musikhalle on 12th March, 1954, and relayed on the Continent, though not in this country. The *première* will be reviewed in our next issue's *New Music* feature).

## OSCAR STRAUS' "MADAME DE . . ."

"BUT I still like "*Madame de . . .*", writes C. A. Lejeune in *The Observer* of 28th March, "for . . . its haunting, Oscar Strauss [*sic*]-Georges Van Parys score". True enough, the synopsis said, "music by Oscar Strauss [*sic*] and Georges Van Parys", but in the event there was little doubt about what was by the one and what by the other. Perhaps Strauss died before he could complete the job; in any case, either composer seems to have contributed one motto tune, and the difference in value between the two melodies becomes painfully obvious when they join hands in a waltz at the ball scene near the end. The various waltz versions (French, Viennese, and English) of Straus' own motto are variations on an original quadruple theme in ternary form and of sequential structure, the more important principal section (which often appears alone) being well defined, the middle section loosely shaped. Basically, Straus' entire "score" consists of the two bars that go to form the outer section's 4-bar sequence—a feat of economy *cum* simplicity which shows how untouched he remained by Hollywood (where he went film-composing in 1937). Straus "haunts" by repetition, both within, and of a tune, the secret of whose repeatability lies in its harmonic structure which re-accumulates some of the very tension it releases, thus demanding perpetual re-release by way of repetition—a delightfully vicious circle. In the present instance, the middle section is so constructed that the recapitulation can fly off at a tangent, upon a *Rückführungs*-modulation to another key. Amongst other scintillating ideas, there is the use of the antecedent as a consequent, the new antecedent being not a musical phrase, but a phrase or sentence or mood in the dialogue! Straus has written better tunes, but there can't be many which show more characteristic devices more shrewdly applied.

H. K.

## Concerts

### LIVERPOOL

The season has provided opportunities for comparison with the Hallé and Birmingham orchestras, leaving us in no state of dissatisfaction with the local orchestra, which is never less than vigorous and musical. It is always remarkably versatile; once or twice it has played with inspiration. The Hallé provided performances of Alwyn's second Symphony and Wordsworth's Third (29th December and 26th January); its strings have a beautiful richness and precision, but its brass is unreliable. At its best it plays superbly, as it did at its first appearance in Sibelius' Second, but sometimes it seems to compensate with lavish *panache* for lack of polish. The Birmingham players brought a resolute but raw performance of the *Sinfonia Antartica* (12th January).

The only connecting thread has been a survey of most of the Waltonian peaks, suggesting that they progress by diminution. The violin Concerto (Endré Wolf, 23rd March) played with technical assurance and a superfluity of sentimental *portamenti*, grows obviously diffuse as it becomes well known; it is hard to find its essential train of thought, so that only lyrical charm and pyrotechnics remain. The viola Concerto (Primrose, 22nd September) remains fascinating, and the Symphony (15th December) is a landmark. Some of its features are imposed, and there are too many contemporary symphonies that accept violence as the line of least resistance, but this work has an essential savagery which is not merely the easy way out of a symphonic *impasse*. The last movement is exciting but fortuitous; even the careful morticing of the oboe theme from the work's opening does not really convince us that this is the real *finale*. Possibly Walton was a changed man by the time he came to write it. The "Coronation" *Te Deum* splendidly accompanied its ceremonial occasion, but it has little of the composer's earlier genius.

The greatest experience amongst new works were the "Ritual Dances" from Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* (6th October). A considerable—and unavoidable—admiration for Tippett's earlier work was no preparation for the grace, clarity and excitement of the

Dances, which were superbly played. On paper, clarity is not one of their most notable features, so that it is easy to understand the critic of the subsequent London performance who found them thickly orchestrated. A reputed twenty-five hours of rehearsal under Rignold led to the conviction, reinforced by a second performance "by popular request" on 15th December, that the composer had reached the point of completely mastering his material. (In the impressive "1945" Symphony it seemed to master him.) The pictorial element obvious in the striding ground bass of the pursuing hound in the first, and the chromatic murmur of water in the second are an integral part of the design, as are the *ritornello* transformation and preparation that link the Dances. These are movements of enormous rhythmic complexity, but they remain dances and do not develop symphonically. Only the last of the set, shorn of its optional chorus, left some ambiguity as to its final effect, and the portion of *libretto* printed in explanation suggested some rather woolly mysticism in the opera's intentions, but these extracts encourage the hope that the music will clarify the issue.

Other novelties to Liverpool were less notable. Duruflé's *Requiem*, with the composer at the organ and Malko conducting (20th October) presents an irritating mixture of styles. It is hard to believe in a Gregorian tone ii that equates itself with D minor, or the *Kyrie* of the Mass treated fugally. Violent percussive effects in the pseudo-plainchant *Libera* are less excusable, but the ghost of Fauré, in the *Pie Jesu*, is most welcome. Jennie Tourel sang this movement most beautifully. The Alwyn and Wordsworth symphonies left no deep impression. Each is an expert manufacture, the former aiming at a Sibelian grand gesture in the *finale*, the latter attempting lightness and grace. Alwyn's materials are commonplace, despite his impressive orchestral technique and uninhibited command of up-to-date harmonic invective. Wordsworth's use of a C-*contra*-C sharp clash to hold the work together seems almost entirely extrinsic, like a chain fastened round the work, which passes pleasantly away without disturbing or exciting the listener. After the *Sinfonia Antartica*, a lady was heard to explain, "Oh, yes. Mabel liked it. She's been on one of these tours to Norway, and she understands music like that". Not having Mabel's advantages, repeated hearings lead firmly to the conviction that the *Sinfonia* is a collection of illustrations of varied degrees of impressiveness. It is Lifesmanship to preface each movement with a quotation that evokes an emotional response before the music starts. Honegger's Symphony for trumpet and strings (9th February), reminds us that not only English music has its seamy side. The work's unrelaxing intensity defeats itself and the trumpet's final revelation is merely trite. Kletzki's performance was extremely sympathetic. Rignold's introduction of Nielsen's first Symphony (6th April) suggested that he had been conducting it for years. The music has a bracing energy, but only achieves originality in its slow movement, which, like the others, stretches out beyond its natural length.

More pleasing was Goossens' performance of Bruckner's third Symphony (17th November) which followed a theatrical mismanagement of Mozart's G minor. Oddly enough, the orchestra sounded convincingly Brucknerian in meditation and exaltation. The time is ripe for more Bruckner, if the conjunction of a sympathetic orchestra and an audience that accepted a masterpiece without a moment's demur is any ground for judgment. Rignold's performance of *Das Lied von der Erde* was within measurable distance of perfection (Nancy Evans and Richard Lewis, 3rd November), but needed a more spacious treatment of the tenor songs. The last movement reached the heart of the matter. Delius' *Paris* (9th February) did not receive the sort of treatment that overcomes its inconsistencies, but was followed by a performance of Elgar's first Symphony without undue rhetoric or any rhodomontade. Kempff played Schumann's piano Concerto (13th December) in a way that almost convinced one that it is a greater work than any of his symphonies, and Bela Siki's performance of Ravel's piano Concerto (for both hands) is not easy to forget.

Kletzki, about to succeed to Rignold, takes over a versatile, hard-working and enthusiastic orchestra. He rose to the challenge by showing that it can play Beethoven's C minor Symphony in the grand manner and make it passionately exciting. His conducting so

far has been in the style of a guest conductor, aimed at broad outline; if he can command as fine a treatment of precise detail Liverpool can look eagerly forward to his period of office. John Pritchard, whose conducting of Mozart has won him our tentative friendship, becomes second in command.

H. R.

### KLETZKI VERSUS MAHLER'S NINTH

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, 20TH JANUARY

ALMOST all important general aspects of this performance of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, including the (critico-)social situation in which it found itself, have been expertly dealt with by Donald Mitchell in a series of articles ("Mahler and his English Critics") in *Musical Opinion* (March, April, May) as well as in his note on Mahler's ninth Symphony in *The Musical Times* (March). It remains for me to make one general and one particular point which may be of use to future conductors of the work.

In his recent book, *Orpheus in New Guises*, Erwin Stein has an eminently practical (and formally very instructive) chapter on "Organizing the Tempi of Mahler's Ninth Symphony". If the precise opposite of every single one of his suggestions can be imagined, a crystal-clear picture of Kletzki's effort can be obtained with the most disturbing ease. It need only be added that Paul Beard was a worthy and unfailingly consistent leader of this misinterpretation which, for the rest, was a quite particularly unfortunate event in its social context because a sentimental performance sounds like a sentimental work to those who have some repressed sentimentality to project.

My concrete suggestion concerns the D minor middle section of the first movement. Stein correctly points out that

the theme . . . is sometimes marred by a mistake which endangers the logic of the phrase: the semiquaver in the 2nd bar . . . should not be pushed off staccato. The notation is merely intended to prevent a blurred repetition of the G#; the two notes should be clearly detached. The same is true, of course, for all repetitions and variations of this motif:



During Kletzki's destruction of the phrase, I discovered the cause of this invariable misunderstanding. From Mahler's bowing indications, conductors and leaders seem to conclude that the players should remove their bows from the string in order to retract them nearer to the heel for the second down-bow—a common, and usually justified reaction to  $\Pi \Pi$ . In reality, Mahler's directions mean, of course, the opposite: his two down-bows ask the players to *interrupt* their down-bowing rather than cut it short, to continue the second down-bow where the first one ended, so that the two are really a single, albeit interrupted down-bow. A future edition of Stein's book should heed this consideration. As for poor old Mahler, there was a limit even to his practical sense: could there be a more ironical example of how over-notation can result in the absolute contrary of its intention?

H. K.

## Reviews of Music

### OLD SCORES—NEW TRIMMINGS

- Mátyás Seiber. *Besard Suite* no. 1 for full orchestra. Miniature score. (Augener.) 7s. 6d.  
Buxtehude. *Jesu, Joy and Treasure*. A sacred Cantata, edited by Robert Groves.  
Vocal score. (Hinrichsen.) 3s.  
J. S. Bach. Cantata no. 170, "*Vergnügte Ruh*", edited by V. Gui. Full score. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 15s.  
*Das musikalische Opfer*. Orchestral version by Igor Markevitch. Full score. (Boosey & Hawkes.)

Perhaps Seiber puts too much trust in the omniscience of modern musical scholarship when referring to Besard's *Thesaurus Harmonicus* of 1603 as being "well known to musicologists". Surprisingly little was known of this important collection containing some 365 lute tablatures by various composers (with the English lutenists Ferrabosco and Dowland among them) and 38 of the learned compiler's own invention until quite recently, when Wolfgang Bötticher published his comprehensive study in Professor Blume's *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, volume I, 1951. The fact—expressly mentioned in Seiber's prefatory note—that this collection of dance tunes of all nationalities and formal types has remained untranscribed in bulk up to date makes it all the more important for student and scholar alike to be able to study the tunes, as selected and arranged by Besard, i.e. in a faithful transcription in staff notation. It is therefore little short of tantalizing for the musicologist to be told in Seiber's preface that he has transcribed the greater part of the work from the original lute tablature into modern notation, and to be fobbed off with a "Besardo-Suite" of six numbers only, scored for the full orchestra of the late nineteenth century, without any indication of their origin or authorship save for unhelpfully generalizing titles. The tunes are lovely and Seiber's brilliant, if at times finicky, orchestration as well as the selection of items makes one long for more. How I wish Seiber had offered us his valuable transcription on two staves only, thereby abstaining from the modern craze for attempting to vivify ancient music for lute or organ through the unfitting medium of the Romantic orchestra. I gather from the title of this publication that more instalments are to follow. In that case I hope Seiber will not find it presumptuous of me to plead for clearer indications of the respective origin of each tune, many of which were invented by eminent English and Italian lutenists. Perhaps I may even persuade him to print one of the tunes in *Suite* no. 2 in simple staff notation, running concurrently with his orchestration, so that students could for once appreciate Besard's own editorial qualities? And please, make it *Besard—Suite* no. 2, instead of the inappropriate "Besardo" *all'italiana*. For Jean Baptiste Besard came from Besançon, lived the greater part of his life in Germany, where the *Thesaurus* was published in Cologne through the Dutch printer Grevenbroich, and called himself either "Besardus" or the germanized "Bisantz aus Burgund".

The editor of Buxtehude's *Jesu, Joy and Treasure* has prepared a practical arrangement for all contingencies, including an organ part with suggestions for registration. It seems a pity that this well produced and handy edition reprints only Sanford Terry's fine English translation of Johann Franck's (1618-1677) famous poem "*Jesu, meine Freude*" and omits the German original. I also wish Mr. Groves had been a little more explicit in his introductory note. He refers to "Franck's hymn" (which had been written in 1653) as if Johann Franck were the only Lutheran poet of that name famous for his texts for chorales, whereas he shares that honour with Salomo and Michael Franck, all of the seventeenth century. Nor does he mention the fact that the lovely choral *melody* which inspired Buxtehude as well as J. S. Bach had been composed in 1656 by Johann Crüger (1598-1662). It would have been a gracious gesture to the German editors of Buxtehude if he had mentioned that this Cantata had been published in volume V of the Complete



Edition of Buxtehude (Ugrino, Klecken-Hamburg) and that it had been offered in a practical edition by B. Grusnick (Bärenreiter, Cassel, 1931).

Vittorio Gui's practical edition of J. S. Bach's Cantata "*Vergnügte Ruh*" (no. 170), is equally welcome. Its main achievement is the rearrangement of parts in the *aria* "*Wie jammern mich doch*" which was originally scored for organ *obbligato* with 2 claviers and violin and viola *all'unisono* (i.e. without bass)—a fact not mentioned in the editorial preface. Gui—remodelling this on a similar *aria* from the *Saint Matthew Passion*—orchestrates it ingeniously for flutes and cors anglais in four parts, instead of the rather unsatisfactory combination of an organ part in the treble with violin parts in the middle of the musical compass and no foundation at all. Less recommendable is the editor's transcription of the oboe d'amore part for ordinary oboe. This process involves him in an awkward skip on page 10. It would therefore seem preferable to transcribe the *obbligato* part of this *aria* also for the later employed cor anglais. Otherwise the edition is carefully prepared and shows the sure, if sometimes dictatorial hand of the experienced conductor.

Igor Markevitch's orchestral version of J. S. Bach's *Das musikalische Opfer* warrants careful consideration. It is an honest attempt to win back the entire work for the practical musicianship of our own day. How far this falls in with Bach's own ideas on the suitability of each canonic study for practical performance will most probably remain guesswork. Despite certain constructional similarities, the case of the *Offering* differs intrinsically from the *Art of Fugue* by virtue of the fact that the earlier work was to a certain extent already arranged by Bach himself with an eye to actual performance. The preliminary *Ricercare* à 3 is written as unmistakably for a keyboard instrument as the *contrapuncti* in the *Art of Fugue* have been written out arbitrarily in an "abstract" open score. It is only the cyclopean *Ricercare* à 6 (in "open score" like the *Art of Fugue*) and the *canones diversi* which seem to cry out for a later editor's imagination. The solution offered by Markevitch is original, practical and in many respects convincing. Two *ripieno* orchestras of strings flank a soloists' orchestra containing woodwinds and a harpsichord. The *canones diversi* are completely worked out, scored and cyclically arranged as parts of a section headed "*Tema con variazioni*". The final *fuga ricercata* is scored for all three orchestras, thereby providing a fitting sonorous climax. The Trio Sonata draws on orchestra I for the quotation of the Royal theme and the harpsichord parts of the trio section were "realized" by the late Dinu Lipatti and Nadia Boulanger. Markevitch's editorial effort deserves a more detailed critical appraisal than is possible in this context. But, even by cursorily glancing over its pages, his edition strikes one as conscientious and inspired by scholarly humility. Markevitch's score should be put to a repeated test in this country's public concerts and broadcasts.

#### CHAMBER MUSIC—OLD AND NEW

- J. S. Bach. *Sechs Triosonaten*. (Sonata 1 and 2.) Edited by Joachim Altemark. Edition A for three instruments. (Möseler Verlag, Wolfenbüttel. English agents: Novello & Co.)
- G. P. Telemann: *Zwölf Phantasien* (for violin solo). Edited by Albert Küster. (Möseler Verlag. Novello & Co.)
- Paul Peürl: *Fünf Variationensuiten und zwei Canzonen* (for strings). Edited and arranged by Karl Geiringer. (Möseler Verlag. Novello & Co.)
- Joseph Gibbs: *Sonatas for violin and harpsichord*. Arranged and edited by Lionel Salter. (Nos. 1 and 5) 5s. and 4s. (Augener.)
- Benjamin Frankel: *Three Poems* for violoncello and piano. 6s. (Augener.)
- Elsa Barraine: *Suite juive* for violin and piano. 10s. 6d. (Schott & Co.)
- Norman Fulton: *Sonata da Camera* for viola and piano. 10s. (Chester.)
- Ian Parrott: *Aquarelle* for viola (or clarinet) and piano. (Chester.) 3s. 6d.
- Marius Flothuis: *Nocturne* for flute, oboe and clarinet in A. Score and parts, 6s. (Chester.)



Malcolm Arnold: *Divertimento* for flute, oboe and clarinet, op. 37; full score, 2s. 6d. (Paterson's Publications Ltd.)

J. S. Bach's organ trios or trio sonatas were composed for Friedemann and designed to be executed on the *Pedalclavizymbel*. The fact that this instrument became extinct long before the harpsichord explains why early Bach-editors like Rellstab (1790) either classified or issued them as organ music or—like Wesley and Horn in their joint edition of 1809-10—published them in odd arrangements for "pianoforte for three hands". Bach himself had used some of their movements as instrumental introductions to his Cantata no. 76, arranging them for oboe d'amore, viola de gamba and *basso continuo*. That they contain manifold possibilities for transcription for strings and winds is fairly obvious. Joachim Altemark presents sonatas 1 and 2 in an arrangement for string trio. In a long and rambling preface he expresses astonishment at the alleged fact that no editor had ever made the attempt to transcribe this music for other instrumental combinations. By this he evidently overlooks Wesley and Horn's editorial effort and shows himself ignorant of Mozart's arrangements of several movements from trio sonatas 2 and 3 for string trio (when preparing fugues by J. S. Bach for performance in van Swieten's house). The only interesting point in the editor's amateurish commentary is his assertion that the autographs are no longer available. What has happened to them? Mr. Altemark's poor equipment as a scholar does not exactly invite a closer investigation of his editorial efforts.

Among numerous reprints of works originally issued by the Kallmeyer Verlag, Wolfenbüttel, the Mösele Verlag offers welcome and handy editions of twelve fantasias by Telemann and several variation suites by Paul Peürl (died 1625) in an arrangement by Dr. Geiringer, originally published in vol. 70 of the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*. Both contain excellent stuff for technical study as well as for *ensemble* playing among musically enlightened amateurs.

Lionel Salter has followed up his valuable edition of sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti with an arrangement for violin and harpsichord of two sonatas by Joseph Gibbs. Gibbs, a younger contemporary of Handel, published his first *opus*, "Eight solos for a violin with a thorough-bass for the harpsichord or bass-violin" in or about 1746 in London. Salter's playable arrangement transforms them into clavier-violin duos. But it seems obvious from the mere title of the first edition that they were designed to be played as trio sonatas. Even Salter's own arrangement would be improved by an added cello supporting the weak bass of the harpsichord.

Benjamin Frankel's thoughtful *Three Poems* for cello and piano might have benefited in structural cogency had they adopted the twelve-tone technique. The *andante passionato* of no. 3 fully reveals the composer's expressionist sensibility and his penchant for ingenious play with contradictory sonorities.

Elsa Barraine's interesting *Suite juive* (1951) for violin and piano introduces the strange but compelling idiom of a genuine musical personality. The queer *pizzicato* effects and faburden fifths of the "Intermezzo" and the intricate double-stoppings in the last movement should give violinists ample food for thought and exercise, while pianists need not be deterred by the occasionally involved style of their (poorly printed) part.

Norman Fulton's *Sonata de Camera* is a welcome addition to the still scanty collection of solo music for the viola. It is competently composed in a consistent brogue of pleasant neo-classicism and contains many effective passages of a *concertante* character for the viola, while keeping the piano in a diaphanous state of subdued but brilliant accompaniment.

Ian Parrott's imaginative, but loosely conceived *Aquarelle* for viola (or clarinet) and piano is less grateful to the viola, being really a clarinet piece and enjoying to the full the possibility of humorous skips and jerks, bridging the wide gap between the instrument's top and its *chalumeau* register.

Malcolm Arnold's *Divertimento* was written in 1943, when this promising composer had not yet shaken off the overpowering influence of Hindemith whose rather *gauche*

and heartless humour evidently helped to shape his own thematic subject matter. The treatment of the mostly canonically intertwined instruments is masterly and deserved a supply of better melodies. The six movements are really conceived as *études* with occasional excursions into mild virtuosity.

There is more thematic cohesion and constructional purpose in Marius Flothuis' commendable *Nocturne*, op. 16, for the same combination. It is really a theme in two sections, followed up by two variations for each thematic sub-section and rounded off neatly by a smartly evaporating *coda*. This little piece of almost Gallic witticism clearly shows how far Dutch composers have travelled since the bad old days of irresistible teutonic influences. It should be welcome to any *ensemble* of ambitious wind players.

#### CONCERTANTE MUSIC FOR ORCHESTRA

Mátyás Seiber: *Notturmo* for horn and strings. Min. score 1951. Arrangement for horn and piano. (Schott.) 1952. 4s. 6d.

*Pastorale and Burlesque* for flute and strings. Reduction for flute and piano. (Schott.) 1952. 5s. 6d.

Benjamin Frankel: Concerto for violin and orchestra, op. 24. Min. score. (Augener.) 1952. 12s. 6d.

*Youth Music*, op. 12 for string orchestra. Full score. (Augener.) 1952. 7s. 6d.

Gordon Jacob: Concerto for flute and strings. Piano arrangement by the composer. (J. Williams.) 1952. 12s. 6d.

P. Racine Fricker: *Prelude, Elegy and Finale*, for string orchestra, op. 10. Min. score. (Schott.) 1952. 4s. 6d.

Philip Sainton: *Serenade Fantastique* for oboe and string orchestra. Min. score. (Chester.)

A spate of new orchestral music by younger British composers emphasizes the current taste for selected sonorities, dependent as much on economic considerations as on the tendency of this generation to avoid the symphonic splendour of a bygone age. Apparently it is still fashionable and also profitable to revive the baroque conception of the *Concerto Grosso*, to explore the relationship of soloist versus *tutti*, in which the former is more often a member of the windband, and to orchestrate for a chamber orchestra, thereby easily bypassing the rigours of full-blooded sonata-style. The resultant music—if often brittle in substance—is eminently practical and offers welcome opportunities for adventurously minded soloists and experimentally inclined bodies of strings. Mátyás Seiber has by now become a much respected member of the *Avantgarde* of progressive British composers. Yet he still seems in search of a personal idiom. It remains the tragedy of the uprooted emigrant-composer to substitute polyglot versatility for the security of a national tradition. The problem becomes all the more complicated in the case of an artist like Seiber, born in a country boasting a strong musical folklore, such as Hungary. The violent crosscurrents of artistic influences—in Seiber's case Bartók, Schönberg's dodecaphonism and French post-Impressionism are special favourites—may easily result in a creative deadlock or in an encyclopaedic prolixity of style. Seiber manages skilfully to steer clear of both dangers, especially in works of small dimensions, but only at the expense of musical substance. The brittle sonorities of his sensitively scored *Notturmo* for horn and strings are evolved from insignificant motive-particles. Strangely enough, the little *Concertante* piece with its Busoni-like tendency to pile up thirds and its chromatic *cadenza à la* Bartók, is expressly dedicated to the memory of Brahms, who would probably have disliked its elliptic form and its play with muted harmonics. Can it be that Seiber's homage to Brahms is expressed in the structural employment of the little phrase,



admittedly a favourite finger-print of Brahms and the thematic nucleus of his Third Symphony? After this attractive but wraith-like "study in grey" the bright water colours of his *Pastorale and Burlesque* for flute and strings come almost as a shock. The serene polytonality of its ambling beginning could have been written by any French post-impressionist, half-way between Debussy, Milhaud and Poulenc. The impression of ever-changing styles seems confirmed by the pungent capriciousness of the *Burlesque*, a piece of brilliantly effective writing for the *concertante* flute, backed by the *martellato* rhythm of gracefully discordant strings.

Both works are issued in very poorly printed piano arrangements, whereas the *Notturmo* miniature score is remarkably well produced.

Benjamin Frankel's music has always been determined by his political convictions in general and by his racial consciousness in particular. It speaks a most convincing idiom whenever it mourns for the fate of the Jewish race to which this composer is evidently proud to belong. Very different from Bloch, and yet no less persuasively Frankel has achieved a distinctly Jewish bent in music. It is movingly expressed in the simple dirge "We remember the Fallen" of his *Youth Music*, composed in 1942, when it bore the significant title "Music for young comrades". Frankel, a composer of great technical accomplishment and of untapped potentialities of feeling and expression, is less happy in the jaunty march movements of that little *Suite* for amateur string orchestras. He evidently lacks the unscrupulous bite and bark of ex-comrades Shostakovich and Prokofiev, who in turn seem unable to draw upon such a store of pre-natal grief and pre-existent woe as the Jew Frankel. The violin Concerto, composed nine years after the *Youth Music*, was conceived as a tribute to "the six million" exterminated Jews of the last world-conflagration. Such a programme encroaches easily on the structural plan and the stylistic chemistry of a work of symphonic proportions. Wherever the "wailing wall"-quality of Frankel's personal idiom may come into play, as in the *serioso* beginning of the Concerto or in the *Andante mesto* of the third movement, the music soars to the higher plane of artistic inevitability. Unfortunately this elevated region is abandoned for the lower altitudes of fashionable violinistic virtuosity à la Walton, whose "malicious" scherzo-type is re-echoed in the "*alla Burla*" section of Frankel's second movement as well as in the slightly faded post-romanticism of the finale. Frankel's paramount problem remains how to integrate his Jewishness and its propensity for rhapsodic and plaintive extemporization into the artistic orbit of a modern, well-equipped British musician, equally at home in the idiom of jazz entertainment as in the lofty realm of constructive atonalism. Footnote to *Youth Music*: the subtitle for the rather indifferent march-tune in section IV "Forward . . . March" should of course read in proper Italian: *Quasi canto popolare*.

P. Racine Fricker, a pupil of Seiber, represents the post-war generation of British composers, growing up against the historic background of Schönberg's and Hindemith's fairly established traditions of style. How much Fricker has learned from both becomes evident in the fugal exposition of the finale and from the ingenious transformation of its theme:



The constructive features of the impressive prelude as well as the sensitive play with chromatic harmonies in the well spaced elegy seem to predestine Fricker to become a champion of dodecaphonism in England. When adopting that technique he will easily discard the facile neo-classicism of Hindemith-inspired motoric subjects such as the one by which his finale is propelled.

Gordon Jacob's flute Concerto is marred by the almost Mendelssohnian romanticism of its all too smooth first movement. Its finale is a superb piece of virtuoso music, brilliantly invented and carried out, with its oscillating A minor—F sharp major harmonies and its breath-taking irregularities of period. The pastoral tranquillity of the second movement as well as the elegiac *Espressivo* of the third are not entirely successful in exorcising a ghostly echo of the immortal French Faun's syrinx. Busoni's haunting clusters of thirds seem to mingle strangely with the soloistic flute from *Peter Grimes'* maritime interludes. Despite these perhaps unavoidable associations of style and tone-colour this is a very attractive work of which a miniature score should be produced in addition to the published piano arrangement.

Philip Sainton's *Serenade Fantastique* in the company of all these very much up-to-date compositions plays the unenviable part of "skeleton in the cupboard". It transmits a faint but noticeable echo of the post-Delcian style which the late E. J. Moeran used with so much grace and dignity. Mr. Sainton, Paris-born and past sixty, manages with admirable ease and self-assurance a slightly frenchified, somewhat desiccated idiom which derives a certain motoric impetus from Delius' favourite 6/8 rhythm, alas, without his flair for chromatic progression and nostalgic melodizing. While offering fair opportunities to the oboe and the imaginatively handled strings, it fails to show the necessary qualities of imagination and mystery rashly promised by its programmatic title. It is attractively printed, although the minute type puts a strain on the reviewer's eye. But surely Mr. Sainton's *tempo* indications and explanatory asides are couched in terms of particularly careless English? Are our linguistic purists in the profession of music criticism—ready at any time to fly into fits of frenzy at the sight of an ungainly term of "musical jargon"—quite happy about a sentence such as the one on page 37: "Tutti as quietly as possible and without nuance"? And do they really believe that the constantly reiterated phrase "Tutti Strings" represents standard English at its best?

#### NEW CHORAL MUSIC

John Gardner. *Cantiones Sacrae* for soprano solo, chorus and orchestra, op. 12. Vocal score. (Oxford University Press.) 9s.

*Das Chorwerk*, herausgegeben von Friedrich Blume. Nos. 9, 33, 42, 19: second edition. (Möseler Verlag, Wolfenbüttel.)

The wheel has come full circle. The days when English composers could conceive music only in terms of Mendelssohn and Brahms are so far off to-day and the establishment of fully idiomatic English music, based on its own glorious Tudor tradition is so firm, that a young English composer under undeniable teutonic influence appears almost as a freak. John Gardner's stimulating and often beautiful *Cantiones Sacrae* (first performed at the Three Choirs Festival in 1952) clearly take their cue from German models, albeit very ancient ones. *Cantio* I ("*Deus noster refugium*") is a chorale prelude on the Lutheran tune "*Ein feste Burg*" in the grand manner of Buxtehude, and *cantio* VI ("*Domine, Refugium*") a meditation upon a canon of Adam Gumpeltzhaimer (1559-1625). This attractive piece of neo-Brahmsian counterpoint would certainly not have "lost face" if the composer had revealed in his prefatory note the whereabouts of his model, which appears in its original form on page 50 of the vocal score. The original is a canon à 3 reprinted in the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern*, vol. X/2, 1909 (ed. Sandberger), page 3. Plainchant motives, mounted in an ingenious scheme of augmented tonalities, permeate and inspire the well planned *Magnificat* (No. VII). *Cantio* III is a fantasia on the tune "York", which plays such an integral part in Vaughan Williams' *Pilgrim's Progress*. No. IV, in prickly 5/8 rhythm, shows traces of Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* especially in the opposing sonorities of melismatic "*Alleluia*" trebles and plainsong-like tenors and basses. But, in the acid pungency of the accompanying trumpets, Gardner's goes beyond the lyrical compass of Britten's ecclesiastically conceived scene. The imaginative treatment of the choir, the absorption of the technique of chorale prelude variation by his orchestra as it was practised during the seventeenth century in Germany,

and finally the declamatory tension in the scanning of liturgical words are equally praiseworthy. Undoubtedly John Gardner is one of the great hopes for English music of a devotional character.

Möseler Verlag, Wolfenbüttel, the legal successor to the extinct Kallmeyer Verlag of pre-1953 days, continues to reprint valuable publications of the former which have become inaccessible. Professor Blume's monumental collection of old choral music—reaching from the early middle ages to the end of the seventeenth century—contains many valuable practical editions of early choral music worthy of revival. Among the 1951 reprints are secular and ecclesiastical compositions by Dufay (edited by Professor Bessler), psalms and the Mass "*De beata vergine*" by Josquin des Prés (edited by Blume himself) and eight hymns by Heinrich Finck edited by Professor Gerber. The names of the editors stand for the highest integrity. The texts of these publications are in the latin original with a German translation underneath. They should be specially welcome to Cathedral choirs.

#### NEW MUSIC FOR THE KEYBOARD

Cyril S. Christopher. Two Recital Pieces (*Fantasy, Scherzo-Fugue*) for organ.

Three Choral Improvisations for organ. Rhapsody on a Ground. (Hinrichsen.)

Peter Wishart. Trio Sonata in B flat for organ. (Oxford University Press.) 6s. 6d.

Healey Willan. Five Preludes on plainchant melodies for organ. (Oxford University Press.) 7s. 6d.

Charles Spinks. Variations on a Greek Folksong, op. 6 for two pianos. (Hinrichsen.)

T. B. Pitfield. *Bagatelle* in C for piano. (Augener.) 2s. 6d.

Erich Sehlbach. *Musica Domestica*, op. 67 (in two books). (Möseler Verlag, Wolfenbüttel. Novello & Co.)

Bernard Naylor. *Sleep, O Sleep* and *To Sleep*: songs with piano. (Augener.) 1s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.

A sheaf of new organ music—combining a surprising degree of technical competence with an equally surprising lack of creative imagination—convinces me anew that Max Reger's early exploits on the modern organ (published more than half a century ago) are still ahead of this epoch. Cyril S. Christopher—a new name, as far as the undersigned is concerned—proves his mettle in three Choral Improvisations (congratulations to the courageous adoption of German spelling in this case), in a well constructed "Rhapsody on a Ground" and in a scholarly, if not very original "Scherzo-Fugue". Extremely well turned out, this music just fails to get under one's skin. It is all too devoid of musical adventurousness. Splendid contrapuntal training wedded to a happy instinct for potent frictions of harmony distinguish Peter Wishart's impressive trio Sonata in B flat, a remarkably mature and convincing offspring of J. S. Bach's famous set. In the rhythmic variety and flexibility of its final *fugato* this trio Sonata puts the composer's study of Hindemith's compositional processes to good account. Healey Willan's five preludes on plainchant melodies are chiefly interesting as utterances of an Englishman of more than seventy who made good in Canada, being to-day one of Toronto's prominent musical educationists. In the processional, "*Urbs Hierusalem beata*", Mr. Willan subscribes even to a mild dose of Regerism without ever reaching the demonic depths of Reger's insurpassable "Inferno" Fantasy, op. 57, composed in 1904. The preludes are doubtlessly very serviceable and effective in their liturgic sphere. They are rather poorly produced.

The shadow of Brahms' technique of keyboard variation looms heavily over Charles Spinks' Variations on a Greek Folksong for two pianos. Bell- and percussion-effects are well turned out and the writing for the instrument is effective in the conventional manner of forty years ago. The *Bagatelle* in C of T. B. Pitfield reads (and sounds) more like a bustling toccata—but how revolutionary Schumann's early piece of that denomination sounds, by way of comparison, despite the same persistency in C major.

The *Musica domestica*, op. 67, by Erich Sehlbach (a teacher of the famous Folkwangschule, Essen) is a conglomeration of pretentious studies in fourths and fifths, the accumulation of which becomes as nauseating as the constantly recurring chord of



six-four in the music of Richard Strauss' generation. The composer's evident affectations in barring and time-signatures do not conceal his utter lack of inspiration.

Two songs by Bernard Naylor on the somewhat dangerous subject of Sleep (on beautiful words by John Gay and John Keats) show much sensitivity for the declamatory issues of the poetry and a happy modulatory turn at the magic passage "turn the key deftly in the oiled wards." But they do not succeed in making use of the sonorities of the piano, despite some subtle pedal effects.

H. F. R.

#### VOCAL MUSIC

Hugo Weisgall. *Soldier Songs* for baritone. (Merrymount Music Press, New York.) \$3.00.

Ned Rorem. *Flight for Heaven*; A Cycle of Robert Herrick Songs for bass voice and piano. (Mercury Music Corporation, New York.) \$2.00.

Norman Peterkin. *A little wind came blowing*. An Irish Air. (Oxford University Press.)

Ben Zion Orgad. *The Story of the Spies*; A biblical Cantata for four-part mixed chorus and orchestra. (Mercury Music Corporation, New York.) \$2.00.

Jan Meyerowitz. *Music for Christmas*. A setting of sacred words and old poems for soli, chorus, and orchestra. (Broude Brothers, New York.)

It is insisting on the obvious to say that any valid vocal style must be based on melody, and singable melody at that. Yet we must not rely too much on the qualifying adjective, for the assumption that it provides an immutably valid definition is a mistaken one. A patron brought up in the Palestrinian traditions would regard as singable melody anything that a Bach *aria* was not; and one who accepted Bach's exacting vocal figurations would strongly condemn the parts Wagner wrote for his voices. Need I add that Wagner's vocal style is pure *cantabilità* compared to Webern's? Of course, one must not lose sight of the historic perspective, but a serious consideration of the past makes us only more conscious of the disease that besets contemporary music, *viz.* the crisis of melody. The modern movement failed to establish a melodic convention at first. An indirect stimulus, however, came with the advent of neo-classicism: it has led us to recognize the necessity of discipline—in the widest sense of the word—and to rediscover the living force of tradition. One has only to remember *Serenade* and the *Michelangelo Sonnets* to realize how far Britten is committed to tradition. The same is true of the new Italian school which has, moreover, the advantage of an almost unbroken tradition of melodic expression.

Unwillingness or inability to face the melodic crisis would, however, still leave various and doubtful ways of escape, such as overrated attention to the words, and the attempt to express—often by "unvocal" means—the verbal meaning of the text. This usually goes hand in hand with disregard for any coherent musical expression; harmonic logic, formal balance, *etc.*, are all sacrificed to "literary" illustration. In consequence the music comes dangerously near to the already discredited *genre* of melodrama.

Most of the pieces contained in Weisgall's set seem to me to suffer from this. In addition, the common reference of the songs seems to me to be a superficial one: each of the different poets represents a different intellectual attitude, and expresses a fundamentally different response to the events in a soldier's life. I consider no. 2, "Suicide in Trenches" and no. 6, "Fife Tune", the musical inspiration of which is quite conspicuous, the two most successful of the collection, for they show consistency of style and spontaneity of melodic approach.

Rorem's cycle shows more consistency of idiom throughout, if only because he had the happy idea of setting Herrick's poems exclusively. The music shows sincerity of feeling and there is considerable solicitude for easily singable melodic line. The last song is preceded by a piano interlude which recapitulates the first song's thematic material and so a certain formal unity is achieved. Yet, with all these virtues, the obviously derivative idiom of the cycle will certainly cause raised eyebrows. That his songs were taken as models to imitate might well be regarded as a compliment by Mr. Quilter—his decorative



harmonic language, his characteristic figuration and piano writing are all here. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to discover an independent musical response to the charms of these well-known lines.

Peterkin's song would assign him among the adherents of the folk-music school: an arrangement of an Irish air, its polished simplicity reveals a refined taste and a sense for stylistic authenticity. The limitations of its strophic pattern are exploited with considerable skill: the first verse is supported with comparatively straightforward harmonies and transparent texture; this is counterbalanced by a more decorative accompaniment in the second, so that up to the end the tension never slackens. It is certainly a most delightful piece, and one which should prove extremely rewarding in any song recital.

The choral pieces are a mixed lot. Orgad's attempt to emulate the folk-music school and to evolve a national Hebrew style is entirely praiseworthy; especially because he seems to have rejected the rather superficial approach which takes the quotation of a few popular and traditional tunes for a native musical revival. Instead, he has explored the peculiarities of the indigenous musical style and endeavours to integrate its characteristic elements into a language that has obvious roots in the current European phraseology. Thus, an abundantly melismatic idiom, plainly inspired by ancient Hebrew chants, is paired to progressive harmonic schemes of telescoped chords and unresolved suspensions. The texture, particularly that of the vocal parts, is too congested for my taste, and the orchestra—as far as it could be judged from the vocal score—is fussy and tends to defeat its own purpose.

Meyerowitz' Christmas music is a little more breezy, more fluent—but generally less adventurous in harmonic and melodic style. In point of the latter its advantage lies in the listeners' and performers' ready acceptance; while being anchored to a basically conventional harmonic idiom—for the generous alterations scarcely conceal the diatonic tonal centres—saves the music from becoming formally disconnected. Both works are extremely suitable for the more ambitious school *ensembles* and similar organizations, for which, indeed, they seem to have been intended.

#### PIANO

Alan Bush. *Esquisse: Le Quatorze Juillet*, op. 38. (Joseph Williams.) 3s.

Tibor Harsányi. *Cinq Etudes Rythmiques*. (J. & W. Chester.) 4s.

*Trois Pièces Lyriques*. (J. & W. Chester.) 5s.

Lennox Berkeley. Concerto for two pianos and orchestra. (J. & W. Chester.) 20s.

None of the pieces under review testifies to any particular preoccupation of its composer with the problems of writing for the piano which were discussed in a previous issue of this journal.<sup>1</sup> Alan Bush's *Esquisse*, a piece in toccata style, comes nearest to showing that the secrets of the instrument have not ceased to stimulate a serious composer's imagination, though he may largely rely on time-honoured methods. He accepted the implicit challenge of adjusting his primary, "uncommitted" musical inspiration to the demands of a specific instrumental medium. The piece shows two-part writing almost throughout, which gives a remarkable transparency to the music; this is maintained even at climaxes where a fuller sonority is expected. The menace of crashing chords is avoided by dissolving the harmonies into basically simple—almost hackneyed—but very pianistic figurations. That their effect is so invigorating is due to Bush's skill in exploring the instrument's opposed registers. Thus, the distance between melody—traditional tunes which survived among the French—and harmonic figuration is always more than an octave, so that the former comes easily into relief while the latter remains clear-cut and intelligible. Another method which Bush applies with ingenuity is the opposing of *staccato* and *legato*. Towards the end he intensifies the texture with added thirds, fourths, and with repetitive triads of pianistic kind. As regards the piece's musical content, *Esquisse* is certainly not a major event: but it sets a happy example, assembling a bunch of unpretentious "folk"-tunes into a shapely, presentable, and significant musical design.

<sup>1</sup> MR, XII, 3; August 1951, p. 243.

Harsányi's music is little known in this country. The present writer has endeavoured to give a portrait of his musical personality in a contemporary<sup>2</sup> where the space devoted to discussing his output for the piano was necessarily subordinated to the general evaluation of his music. His spontaneous and resourceful instrumental writing, and his considerably advanced vocabulary appear at their best in the Five Rhythmic Studies whose jazz-influenced piquancy is so successfully blended with a typical Parisian flavour. The rhythmic impulse of jazz is the first and most obvious to be noticed, but let it be said at once that there is no trace of any mechanical imitation of superficialities: rather, that jazz played a similar function in his musical idiom as did Hungarian folksong in the music of his compatriots Bartók and Kodály: it indicated a possibility of attaining, first and foremost, metric and rhythmic freedom. The fifth Study shows the culmination of the process: here the jazz impulses are completely assimilated into a terse musical speech which suggests, rather than expresses, a particular experience. Apart from the rhythmic factor there are certain harmonic and melodic turns suggestive of jazz, such as blues and tango in the second and fourth studies. The commendably simple design of all the pieces discloses a basic *da-capo* pattern. The pianistic writing is refreshingly crisp and not without a certain brilliance. Percussive technique is well in evidence, yet this is tempered with some of the more "traditional" devices of jazz piano-playing, in the accompanying left hand for example.

After the sparkling, dry champagne of the former, the Three Lyric pieces are like the tepid punch of provincial garden parties. The aimless chromaticism, cloying sentimentality, and the unimaginative writing for the instrument where the old war-horse of octave passages is too often resorted to, are rather depressing. On the credit side, there are a few—all too few—passages which show a glimpse of the composer's feeling for harmonic delicacy.

In Berkeley's Concerto the piano writing is eclectic at its best and uninspiringly conventional in its unguarded moments. The employment of two keyboards does not seem to me to be wholly justified: duplication, in this instance, is not conducive to increased sound volume, even if this were desirable. What is obtained mostly is an additional amount of clatter and opportunity for fussiness. After the flourishes of the introduction, the *concertante* writing of the main *allegro* does its best to keep body and soul together for ideas that are undistinguished both in content and presentation. Some play is made with contradictory thirds and the like, but the effect is unconvincing. What saves this movement is its formal control obtained by flanking the central *allegro* with a slow introduction and postlude of related thematic content. In the second and last movement he succeeds far better. His methods are certainly more conservative here, and one is left wondering if the consistent instrumental writing and the suitably planned presentation of his thoughts were not due to the limitations of a conventionalized style, and the obligatory formal discipline of "theme and variations".

The rôle of the pianos is principally a decorative one: the figurations are effective, though hardly original. There is nothing startlingly new in note-repetitions spread over three octaves and studded with gleams of auxiliary semitones, while a melismatic variant of the theme is presented *unisono* in the orchestra (variation 6); or in the two pianos sharing between them the cascading passages that adorn the orchestra's harmonic variation of the theme (variation 3); and yet these instances are full of genuine poetic feeling and enchantment. Indeed, room is even found for a variation of purely Chopinesque pianism (no. 10) with its delicately shifting chromatic harmonies and melodic decorations, without essentially disturbing the stylistic homogeneity of the whole set. That this movement differs to such a remarkable degree from the preceding one, derives, mainly, from the careful balance of the solo instruments in relation both to each other and to the orchestra. But it derives, too, from the enforced consistency of style within each variation. The theme itself is set in a traditional ternary pattern, and has a sustained melodic life that is exquisitely coloured with romantic reminiscences.

J. S. W.

<sup>2</sup> *The Chesterian*, vol. XXVII, 171; July, 1952; p. 14 *et seq.*

## Gramophone Records

### TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF MONTEVERDI'S VESPRO DELLA BEATA VERGINE

THE revival of early Baroque music and in particular of one of its most remarkable representatives has received fresh impetus with the appearance of two recordings of Monteverdi's *Vespers* (one issued by Vox, the other by L'Oiseau-Lyre).<sup>\*</sup> Indeed, this work consisting of twelve extensive movements and a *Magnificat*, is not only a major contribution of the master but also, so to speak, a compendium of the variegated vocabulary, both vocal and instrumental, of its epoch. A performance, unaided as it is by tradition, faces innumerable problems. It would thus be unreasonable to expect to see them all solved at one stroke.

The recordings differ mainly in the type of arrangement which underlies each. Of the two scores, the one prepared by Dr. Hans F. Redlich<sup>1</sup> (for Vox) seems to me to have features which I regret to say, in view of the author's reputation as a Monteverdi scholar, are debatable. I will discuss them briefly and in the order of emphasis. First of all, Dr. Redlich has changed the sequence of the original publication of 1610, although he admits that "it adheres to the general outline of the liturgy".<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the initial and the final movements, he has arranged the others in such a way that a section for soloists always alternates with one for chorus. This is a deviation from his own printed version where the solo movements are concentrated in the centre of the work, thus forming what amounts to a middle section. Both types of organization then reveal a principle of regularity which is altogether alien to the early Baroque. *Nisi Dominus* and *Lauda Jerusalem*, two long, impressive choral movements for ten and seven voices respectively, have been omitted, and the conductor, encouraged by an "*ad. lib.*" mark in the score, has added forty measures of the *Ave Maris Stella*. In spite of the composer's specific instrumentation, Dr. Redlich has created a *cappella* passages at will (for example in the entire *Et Misericordia*), orchestral doublings, and *obbligato* parts for the viola da gamba which too often are mere variants of one or the other of the upper voices instead of real counterpoints. Finally, as has been pointed out previously,<sup>3</sup> various small inaccuracies have been taken over from the edition in the Complete Works.

Dr. Leo Schrade's arrangement (for L'Oiseau-Lyre), which is still in manuscript, has not been available to me, so that a critical estimate of it must remain incomplete. It is obvious though that the score includes Monteverdi's work in its entirety and in its liturgical order, following without any doubt the original part books; moreover, the *basso continuo* realizations are in style. Up to this point, then, the score has a high degree of historical veracity. However, one finds also several arbitrary *cappella* passages (in *Lauda Jerusalem* and occasionally in *Laudate Pueri*) as well as a few disturbing *tempi* which are apparently not of the conductor's doing. In a private communication Dr. Schrade has told me that his interpretation of Monteverdi's note values was guided by the following principles: "1. A systematic comparison of all the forms of notation . . . used for every piece in the original, and full consideration of all additional remarks found in the original. 2. . . . the *cantus firmi* must be comprehended as melodies, not as an incoherent succession

<sup>\*</sup> Vox PL 7902 (two records) and L'Oiseau-Lyre OL 50021-2. As Professor Nathan's detailed comparative review restricts itself to matters of arrangement and interpretation, it should be added that the latter recording is the better from the engineering aspect [Ed.].

<sup>1</sup> Made in 1934 and published by Universal Edition, Vienna, in 1949. A vocal score has been kindly put at my disposal by Associated Music Publishers, New York.

<sup>2</sup> In the notes to the recording. In the preface to the score he writes, however: "The fact alone of Monteverdi offering two different versions of the same *Magnificat* . . . is proof that the sequel of items, as provided in the original, has no relevancy for the practical purposes of to-day".

<sup>3</sup> By Dr. Schrade in THE MUSIC REVIEW, November, 1953. One might also disagree with occasional passages of the *basso continuo* realization where quick runs interfere with sustained tones of solo voices—something that Viadana, Agazzari and Gagliano warn against.

of sustained tones, hence the necessity of speeding up all counterpoints". Nevertheless I cannot convince myself that the hectic speed of *Lauda Jerusalem*, for example, is compatible with its massiveness and polyphonic texture.<sup>4</sup>

Aside from their scores, the two recordings approximately equal each other in their standard of performance. The choral sections, difficult as they are, are delivered with professional competency; so are most of the instrumental ones. And often enough do the female soloists charm with a vocal quality that is more than respectable.

Both interpretations are weak in all movements and passages which are performed by solo male voices. With forced tones and ambiguous intonation the virtuoso technique of the time (the *gorgia*) can not possibly materialize. All these quickly repeated tones, trills, and swift runs become ludicrous if executed without agility and precision; nor are accentuations on individual tones appropriate to *melismas*, for they emphasize intervallic relations in what is merely a sort of ornamentation. Moreover, the early Baroque demanded of its singers not only *dolcezza*, *soavità*, *esquisitezza*—to use contemporary phraseology—but subtle shadings of volume and *timbre* and concomitant emotional associations. At various passages in the *Vespers* for example, the suspension dissonance, particularly that of the second, would thus acquire a languidness which, on the other hand, must be avoided in the more abstract motet style of a Lassus or Palestrina.

While the monodic passages for female soloists are sung at least with restraint in the L'Oiseau-Lyre recording, they are lent an *espressivo*, in the version issued by Vox, which is inspired by the literal meaning of the words. This in my opinion is the consequence of an erroneous notion. For it was exactly Monteverdi's intention to combine the sacred text (and the sacred chants) with the stylized passion and vocal flourishes of a secular, aristocratic art. Why then assimilate one element to the other? In a proper interpretation devotion will acquire an edge of artificiality which may seem unusual to some of us, but religious scruples have no part in the matter.

There is an astonishing variety of vocal *ensemble* settings in the *Vespers*. One can detect the different idioms by tying them in with elements of earlier works: with Monteverdi's own madrigals (especially those of the second part of the Fifth Book), the poly-choral compositions of Giovanni Gabrieli, the Netherlandish motet, etc. Structural patterns such as these have indeed been made audible in the two interpretations of the work, but it seems to me that they can be articulated still further; and to this end a special scholarly study (elaborating on the analyses in the Monteverdi books by Dr. Schrade and Dr. Redlich respectively) might contribute substantially. H. N.

### DELIUS

*A Mass of Life (Eine Messe des Lebens).*

Rosina Raisbeck; Monica Sinclair; Charles Craig; Bruce Boyce, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and London Philharmonic choir, c. Beecham.

Columbia 33 CX 1078-79.

*Appalachia\**

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and chorus, c. Beecham. Columbia 33 CX 1112.

Paris: *The Song of a Great City.\* In a Summer Garden. Summer Night on the River.*

London Symphony Orchestra, c. Collins. Decca LXT 2899.

The music of Delius was one of the many amenities of civilization to go out of fashion—almost, indeed, to disappear—with the onset of war or, more accurately, with the departure of Sir Thomas Beecham for America in the Spring of 1940. "Enlightened" musical opinion found this to be decadent stuff and we were assured that Delius had had his day. Listen closely two or three times to the first movement of *A Mass of Life*, with a full score if possible, and the quirks of what passes for criticism will astonish you.

<sup>4</sup> Additionally, an inconsistency may be mentioned. While Dr. Schrade (in *The Musical Quarterly*, January, 1954, p. 144) considers it "mandatory" to use the *basso continuo* realizations which Monteverdi has written out for a few of his movements, he neglects them almost completely in his own arrangement.

\* Strongly recommended.

Has England fostered so many composers of undisputed international rank that we can have music like this as being of no account? Elgar wrote sweeping paragraphs, and occasionally whole movements, which illuminate the mind and irrigate the brain—as this does here. We may think we see a fleeting glimmer of similar inspiration in the work of Walton and Rubbra, but these are still cases of promise rather than fulfilment and, at the highest level, they are all we have.

In the late thirties Sir Thomas Beecham planned a performance of *A Mass of Life* to be given in Queen's Hall with four soloists of international rank; that it had to be cancelled was a calamity, for such soloists are essential to a full realization of the immense power of the best pages of the work and they are precisely what the present recording lacks. Boyce is the best of the four, which is as well since his is the principal part, but there is little flexibility in his voice as here recorded and he is almost always dynamically out of balance with the orchestra—the voice is artificially made to sound larger while the orchestra is diminished, which is absurd and entirely contrary to what Delius would have wished. Of the others the tenor and the soprano are the weakest, but one feels that all four are striving valiantly to achieve a result which, when all is sung and done, remains only partly realised. The orchestral playing is a real joy, as was to be expected, but the London Philharmonic choir are inconsistent and, for example, their admittedly complicated passages in III do not emerge with anything approaching crystal clarity. The recording fluctuates from the excellence of the first pages of the work to some really serious distortion at minimum radius—the first side being possibly the worst offender. It is a great pity so many reservations have to be made, for *A Mass of Life* is one of the masterpieces of Western music and, in view of its immense practical difficulties, these records are unlikely to be duplicated for some time. Despite their imperfections they can and will provide much enjoyment of a rare kind.

Parts of *Appalachia* look a mess on paper but it comes off in performance remarkably well, unlike *Sea Drift* which looks better than it usually sounds. Sir Thomas gives a wonderful performance of these variations which is well recorded and can be recommended without reserve.

Decca's new record of *Paris* is a triumph for their *ffy* technique. It is also eloquent of the recent improvement in the London Symphony Orchestra and establishes Anthony Collins as a first class interpreter of Delius. The sensitive, evocative character of the introduction and epilogue is exactly caught, the body of the *nocturne* is allowed no middle-aged spread and, in short, a superb piece of music-making is here preserved almost miraculously. The two slighter companion pieces are also played and recorded to a high standard.

#### LOHENGRIN

Maud Cunliff, Rudolf Schock, Josef Metternich, Margarete Klose, Gottlob Frick: NWDR Orchestra and chorus, c. Wilhelm Schüchter. His Master's Voice ALP 1095-98.

Eleanor Steber, Wolfgang Windgassen, Hermann Uhde, Astrid Varnay, Josef Greindl: Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and chorus, c. Joseph Keilberth. Decca LXT 2880-84.\*

The Decca recording was made during performances given at last year's Bayreuth Festival and is absolutely complete. The His Master's Voice set, on four discs compared with Decca's five, cuts a number of pages in the last act. There is also a Nixa version which has not been submitted for review.

First, for those readers who have up-to-date equipment with proper provision for matching the various recording characteristics, the HMV set—as one would expect—gives the best results with the COL LP characteristic; so also does the Decca, unlike most of this company's products which usually conform to AES. (In parenthesis, isn't it time that all recording companies printed on the sleeves of their records what they recommend in the way of a play-back characteristic?)

\* Strongly recommended.



If the prelude to the first act were to be taken as a criterion for the whole work there is no doubt at all that His Master's Voice would have to be preferred as providing by far the pleasanter listening; Schüchter achieves gloriously steady bowing from the strings of the NWDR Orchestra, the pitch of the recording is commendably constant and the surface of the disc is quieter than average, though not entirely silent. The Bayreuth recording gets away to a bad start: Keilberth's *tempo*, planned presumably to be as slow as possible, turns out to be even slower than that and involves the strings in just that unsteadiness of tone which Schüchter so carefully avoids; there are, too, disturbing noises from the audience—though these are not frequent—and there is some unsteadiness of pitch in the recording itself; fortunately, however, the snags disappear as the prelude proceeds.

Among the singers—no bad assembly by present-day standards—Hermann Uhde, as Telramund, stands head and shoulders above all the rest. In the theatre he is always the outstanding member of every cast in which he appears, and here, even through the medium of recording alone, his is the one over-riding characterization—the one real personification of Wagner's invention, in comparison with which all the others are no more than pasteboard. By ordinary standards Metternich's Telramund is good; his voice, though less powerful than and lacking the extreme flexibility of Uhde's, has a similar sombre colouring and Margarete Klose, as Ortrud, combines with him to underline the Macbeth-Lady Macbeth relationship of the two, a psychological essential which cannot be felt to exist between Uhde and Varnay. Although Steber's Elsa completely failed to come to life on the stage, her voice is musical, accurate and true as here recorded, while Cunitz seems at times to find the part a strain and omits a number of the embellishments shown in the score. In the matter of voice alone there is little to choose between Schock and Windgassen, though in characterization the latter shows the greater refinement. Lastly, as the King Greindl is no match for Frick whose full, sonorous tones and immaculate diction lend unusual distinction to what is often regarded as a stooge's part. The Bayreuth chorus, trained by Wilhelm Pitz, sings magnificently throughout, whereas that of NWDR completely fails to sustain a comparable standard.

With the one exception mentioned above, the Bayreuth Orchestra—running to about fifty violins and other instruments in proportion—give a better account of the music than that of NWDR; compare, for example, the two versions of the passage immediately preceding Elsa's first entry.

Readers who are familiar with the Bayreuth auditorium will expect the Decca records to have captured the authentic sound of the place, they will expect to be conscious of the slow reverberation of the building with all that that means to Wagner's music in general and to *Lohengrin* in particular. They will not be seriously disappointed. These records are not the equal of the magnificent *Parsifal* issue of a few years ago, and it must be remarked that two copies of side 9 have exhibited the same unfortunate flaw which sounds like a faulty tape-join, but they represent a fine achievement and can be relied upon to give many hours of enjoyment and—let us say it—instruction. The strong points of the His Master's Voice issue are the opening prelude, the singing of Gottlob Frick and a substantially lower price, but the recording in general is less good and deteriorates the more seriously towards minimum radius.

*Beethoven: Symphony no. 1 in C, op. 21, and Symphony no. 8 in F, op. 93.*

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

Decca LXT 2824.

The first Symphony is conducted by Schuricht, the Eighth by Böhm. The former is played with a refreshing vigour but the trio is insufficiently precise; the string "bounce" in the final *allegro* is most attractive. The recording is unfortunately coarse and wiry with metallic upper strings and obtrusive surface noise.

The eighth Symphony is better recorded in that it can be balanced to produce a more musical sound, but the pressing tested would not allow the reviewer's light-weight pick-up to run a normal course; severe groove-jumping in the first and third movements may be a peculiarity of this sample copy only, but readers are warned to listen before buying.



Wagner: *Götterdämmerung*, *Siegfried's Rhine Journey*, and *Funeral Music*.\*

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, c. Steinberg.

Capitol CTL 7035.

The *Rhine Journey* is given a finely balanced and very intense performance, while in the *Funeral Music* Steinberg unfolds a magnificent panorama and gives us a superb vision of the piece as a whole. The recording of both pieces is excellent, with a wide range of sound, very little surface noise and only slight deterioration towards the spindle. The disc also includes the famous *Prelude and Liebestod* (*Tristan*) in a cool and leisurely performance with a fine balance of instruments, but here the quality falls perceptibly as the radius decreases. It is becoming obvious that connoisseurs of orchestral records will have to take serious notice of all Steinberg's Capitol issues.

G. N. S.

Mozart: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525.

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, c. Keilberth.

Telefunken TM 68010.

Beethoven: *Coriolan* overture, op. 62, and *Egmont* overture, op. 84.

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, c. Keilberth.

Telefunken TM 68002.

Weber: *Peter Schmitt* overture, and *Preciosa* overture.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Böhm.

Decca LW 5032.

Berlioz: *Benvenuto Cellini* overture, op. 23,\* and

Lalo: *Le Roi d'Ys* overture.

Orchestra of Opera Comique, c. Wolff.

Decca LW 5042.

Verdi: *Nabucco* overture,\* and *Sicilian Vespers* overture.

New Symphony Orchestra, c. Erede.

Decca LW 5040.

Strauss (Johann): *Polkas and Waltzes*.\*

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, c. Steinberg.

Capitol CTL 7051.

Saint-Saëns: *Le Rouet d'Omphale*, op. 31,\* and *Danse Macabre*, op. 40.

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet.

Decca LW 5030.

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*, op. 35.

L'Orchestre Symphonique de la Radio Belge, c. André.

Telefunken LGX 66018.

Elgar: *Serenade* for string orchestra, op. 20, and

*Introduction and Allegro* for quartet and string orchestra, op. 47.

New Symphony Orchestra, c. Collins.

Decca LW 5047.

Sibelius: *Scènes Historiques*, op. 25 and 66.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

Columbia 33 C 1018.

Spritely playing and good recording go into the latest *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*: but the beat is too square and the tone too thick and what we get is not a small serenade but a hefty mock-symphony. The same conductor and orchestra get much nearer to their composer in *Egmont* and *Coriolan* but van Beinum's version of that same coupling on Decca LW 5015 has all that the music calls for and is a markedly better recording. The pairing of *Peter Schmitt* and *Preciosa* should have made a lovely record; Böhm and the Vienna orchestra could have ensured this, had the engineers done their job: the recording provides acid strings and wheezy wind. We should hear more of the present Paris Opera Comique Orchestra; they give first-rate accounts of both the smart, polished Lalo work and the loose jointed orchestral frolic of Berlioz. The Verdi record is first-rate all round. Listening to *Vespers* again for the first time in some years, one is reminded that it was composed only a year or so after *Traviata*; and, widely different though the two works are in spirit, several of the devices from that opera, both orchestral and harmonic, get into this overture. The Strauss record is starred for several reasons: it has spirited, stylish playing and superb recording; it is also a happy selection of items, including, of waltzes, *Emperor*, *Adele* (never heard these days and a lovely piece), and *Accelerations* and the five most popular polkas, plus *Champagne*, which was previously unknown here and is a gem.

\* Strongly recommended.

The two most played of Saint-Saëns' symphonic poems get excellent treatment from Ansermet; all in all this is probably the best of the many *Danse Macabre* recordings. *Scheherazade* got on to LPs early (by Ansermet and Paris Conservatoire) for Decca to make one of their mis-hits; this Telefunken issue is very well recorded and the Belgian Radio orchestra excellently directed, so that those with a liking for the music now have an LP version worth buying.

We have already spoken well of Decca's "English Music for Strings" from which the two Elgar works have, presumably, been abstracted to make Anthony Collins' fine Elgar performances available on a smaller, cheaper record. It is a safe buy.

In 1899 Sibelius wrote the music for a set of historical tableaux shown in Helsinki at a nationalist demonstration. Out of that music came, eventually, the *Suite*, op. 25 (1899), *Finlandia* and, twenty-three years later, the *Suite*, op. 66. The whole of the latter is on this record, and one movement of op. 25 as makeweight. It is in the nature of this kind of occasional music that one can detect no difference in technique or outlook in the two widely spaced suites. This is not distinguished music in any case, and one understands how *Finlandia* came to outrun its stable companions. The pieces are brilliantly performed and recorded.

*Haydn: Missa Brevis in F and Missa St. Joannis de Deo.\**

Heuser and Berger with Heiler, Chamber Orchestra of the Vienna Symphony and the Akademie Kammerchor, c. Hans Gillesberger. Nixa LLP 8030.

*Mozart: Mass in F, K.192 (Missa Brevis) and Dixit et Magnificat, K.193.*

Franz, Grabner, Lassner, with Sauer, Mozarteum Orchestra and chorus (Salzburg), c. Schneider. Nixa LLP 8018.

*Cherubini: Requiem Mass in C minor.\**

Orchestra Stabile e Coro dell' Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, c. Giuliani. Columbia 33 CX 1075.

*Janáček: Slavonic Mass.*

Brno Radio Symphony Orchestra with soloists, chorus and organ, c. Břetislav Bakala. Supraphon LPM 39-40.

There are 25 years between the short Mass, written during Haydn's first two years in Vienna, and the St. John Mass, which probably dates from 1774-5. The fact is scarcely evident in the music and both are works fully worthy of the composer of *The Creation*. It is difficult to see why, incidentally, we rarely hear any of the twenty-four Masses Haydn wrote; perhaps these very well-made recordings will help; those who sing in choirs should certainly get hold of them.

Both the Mozart works belong to his eighteenth year. K.192 is, after the unfinished C minor, probably his finest Mass, being better music by far than the well-known Salzburg Masses of 1775-6. It is a great pity that this record cannot be recommended; there is every evidence that the performances are good. Recording of the instruments is so bad that one is unable to say for certain whether K.192 is accompanied by Mozart's required two violins, bass and organ, or by a sizeable orchestra.

Although Cherubini's first published composition was a Mass, his important church music did not come until late in life when he ceased to be preoccupied with opera. Of that late output the C minor *Requiem* is his greatest work. It is magnificently performed, and the recording sound.

Janáček's Mass is written to a text in the Bulgarian idiom, which is the language of Greek orthodox religion. Composed in 1926, it is one of his last works. Of the eight parts, three are entirely orchestral, most are written round two central themes, and all are of an extreme simplicity. There is no fugal writing and the impact of the work resembles that of a Bruckner symphony with its mixture of piety of spirit, simplicity of expression, and complexity of orchestration and technique. The playing and singing are

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\* Strongly recommended.

indeed fine, the soprano soloist doing especially well. By comparison, *e.g.*, with the Cherubini work, this Mass lacks unity and profundity. But it has joyousness and hope and is clearly just as sincere.

On the odd side of the Supraphon issue is a performance of Janáček's piano Sonata in E minor, a romantic work of frankly Lisztian affinities. The record is truly remarkable for the excellence of piano reproduction.

*Bach: Prelude and Fugue no. 32 in E flat minor, and English Suite no. 3 in G minor, and Mozart: Sonata no. 8 in A minor, K.310, and Rondo in D, K.485.*

Friedrich Gulda.

Decca LXT 2826.

*Beethoven: Sonata in C, op. 53.\** Annie Fischer.

Supraphon LPM 62.

*Schubert: Sonata in A minor, op. 42.\** Wilhelm Kempff.

Decca LXT 2834.

*Schubert: Moments Musicaux, op. 94, nos. 1 in C, 2 in A flat, 3 in F minor, 4 in C sharp minor.* Walter Gieseking.

Columbia LX 1588-9.

Friedrich Gulda puts some masterly playing into the Bach-Mozart issue. The darkly-coloured Rondo K.485 is beautifully interpreted and the Bach performances cannot be faulted. That the recording should be below par is regrettable; readers anxious to collect this pianist's work should hear the record first in case this reviewer has been unlucky in his copy, for the playing is beyond praise. The Supraphon issue is first-class. This company seems to have decided on piano reproduction at a low volume-level; the record is very quiet by established standards, but beautifully clear and accurate. Annie Fischer is a phenomenally gifted pianist. She is not yet in Kempff's class, and that pianist makes all there is to be made of the Schubert op. 42 on a sound recording. Gieseking's Schubert performances should be compared with Edwin Fischer's (His Master's Voice DB 21568) which include some of the same individual pieces recorded to an equal, middling standard. Pianists of this eminence should be able to play works of this genre to perfection; both do.

*Beethoven: Symphony no. 4 in B flat, op. 60.*

Vienna Philharmonic, c. Furtwängler.

His Master's Voice ALP 1059.

*Mahler: Symphony no. 2 in C minor.*

I. Steingruber, H. Rössl-Majdan, Akademie Kammerchor and Singverein der Musikfreunde and Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Klemperer.

Vox PL 7012 (2 discs).

It has generally been difficult to recommend Furtwängler's performances as they have reached us, since the war, on records and broadcasts. Yet he remains a big figure whose attitudes, expressed in great interpretations, are often arresting. He makes no great point in this issue and yet succeeds in providing a lovely performance—urbane, flowing, and wholly free of the fits and starts of recent Furtwänglerian moods. One of the best of his records on LP.

No efforts to popularize certain of the works of Mahler can further the just cause of his music. In this version of the second Symphony the best efforts of the artists are swamped in page after deadly page of turgid and vulgar eyewash, eddying round a few solid bars of musical inspiration. Solid effort on the part of players, singers and conductor fails to give any sense of direction to the flood.

*Schubert: Mass in E flat.\**

Rathauschor, Hofstätter, Planayavsky, Equiluz and Berry, with Akademie Kammerchor and Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Moralt.

Vox PL 7840.

*Ravel: L'heure espagnol.\*†*

Lindo, Dran, Mollien, Hoffmann and Mans with l'orchestre radio-symphonique de Paris, c. Leibowitz.

Vox PL 7880.

\* Strongly recommended.

† see p. 169.

Besides one to a German text, Schubert wrote six Latin masses, the E flat work coming last and within a few months of his death. It is full of lovely things, none the less lovely because they sometimes lack liturgical feeling. Whether, because of its Schubertian finery of suspensions, chromatic progressions and minor-major-minor changes, the work is or is not admissible in a Catholic church is irrelevant. All great music glorifies God, some more than other, and this more than most. Under the influence of his time, Schubert who, unlike Mozart, had never been kicked out by an archbishop, did his honest best to be piously conservative. As Arthur Hutchings has pointed out, Schubert began no less than seven fugues in the E flat Mass. That he did not finish any of them is also irrelevant: that in spite of them the Mass is pure Schubert bears witness to at least one holy law, viz., *truth will out*. The singing is sound, the playing gorgeous and the recording good.

In 1911 Ravel set a successful one-act lyric farce by Franc-Nohain word for word—an unpromising method of opera composition. *L'heure espagnol* is the naughty but lovable story of the clockmender's pretty wife who is obliged to entertain simultaneously the poet who merely talks about love, the dirty old business man who wants to get on with it at a price, and the labourer, whose prowess at moving grandfather clocks containing unwanted visitors, singlehanded, wins her heart. The resulting one-act opera may or may not play well. But it sounds wonderful. The poet's love song, the waltz song, the *Sequidille* and the *Habañera*—a quintet—which provides the finale, include some of Ravel's most attractive, and most amusing music. Singing and playing are first-class and the recording most faithful.

**Bach:** *Concerti for harpsichord and strings*, no. 4 in A,\* no. 5 in F minor, no. 7 in G minor.

Helmer Elsner and Pro Musica Orchestra, c. Reinhardt. Vox PL 7260.

**Mozart:** *Sinfonia concertante in E flat* (K.297b) for oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon and orchestra.

Fischer, Flackus, Gormer, Gehring and Pro Musica Orchestra, c. Reinhardt, and *Sinfonia concertante in E flat* (K.364)† for violin, viola and orchestra.

Barchet, Kirchner, and Pro Musica Orchestra, c. Seegeeken. Vox PL 7320.

**Beethoven:** *Piano Concerto*, no. 3 in C minor, op. 37.

L. Kraus and Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Moralt. Vox PL 7270.

*Piano Concerto*, no. 4 in G, op. 58.

G. Novaes and Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Klemperer. Vox PL 7090.

**Schubert:** *Moments Musicaux in A flat and F minor*, op. 94, nos. 2 and 3.

Fischer. His Master's Voice DB 21568.

**Chopin:** *Sonatas*, no. 2 in B flat, op. 35, and no. 3 in B minor, op. 58.\*

G. Novaes. Vox PL 7360.

*Piano Concerto*, no. 1 in E minor, op. 11.

Horszowsky and Municipal Philharmonic, Vienna, c. Swarowsky and

*Impromptus*: no. 1 in A flat, op. 29, no. 2 in F sharp minor, op. 36, no. 3 in G flat major, op. 51, and no. 4 in C sharp minor, op. 66. Vox PL 7870.

*Piano Concerto*, no. 2 in F minor, op. 21.

G. Novaes and Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Klemperer. Vox PL 7100.

**Ravel:** *Scarbo*. G. Scherzer.

Parlophone E 11509.

**Dukas:** *Villanelle*, for horn and piano. Brain and Moore.

Columbia DB 3300.

The three Bach clavier concerti are very well produced, using a harpsichord which, though thin, neither shrills nor wheezes. Readers may wish to be reminded that no. 7 is a keyboard transcription of the A minor violin Concerto and that the little fifth Concerto includes a famous *pizzicato* slow movement which some scholars impute, perhaps with the rest of the Concerto, to Vivaldi originally. Shocking string recording in the *Sinfonia*

\* Strongly recommended.

† see p. 170.

*Concertante* for wind and strings puts the Mozart issue beyond the pale; this is a tragedy, because the violin-violoncello work is largely free of the trouble and is gloriously played by Barchet and Kirchner.

Whilst Guiomar Novaes gets nothing more out of Beethoven's fourth piano Concerto than we are used to hearing from the now almost inevitable female soloist, Lili Kraus does amazingly well with the third. We cannot star her performance because that is tantamount to advice on its purchase. Schnabel and Solomon have each done it so much better, and any woman pianist has as much chance of coming near to their performances as of capturing the world's 100 yards sprint record or the chess championship. Miss Kraus, much to be preferred in Mozart or Beethoven to any other woman pianist, is here delightfully accompanied and very well recorded.

Nobody who has heard Marina Slezarjeva's performance of the second Chopin Concerto on Supraphon H23969-72 will be interested in Novaes' rendering which is not more attractive than Helen Ballon's on a recent Decca issue, a much cheaper record. Because Chopin makes better use of the orchestra in the first movement of Concerto no. 1 than anywhere else at all, the first side of the Horszowsky issue is good entertainment. The two remaining movements are weak, and Horszowsky kills what substance there is in the finale by allowing it, or conniving with Swarowsky to allow it to stumble and drag.

That Madame Novaes' Beethoven should be inadequate, yet her playing of Chopin's sonatas be extraordinarily fine will, we hope, teach her something. The Vox record of the B flat and B minor sonatas is perhaps the best all-round piano issue we have so far had from them; recording is superb.

The piano works of Schubert and Ravel, and the horn and piano piece of Dukas are on 78s. The artistry on both performers' part in the Dukas is breathtaking; there is gross disc-centre fading on the record. Fischer's Schubert is sound, pleasant and unexceptional. Grete Scherzer provides in "*Scarbo*" another episode from Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*, perfectly performed. J. B.

*Suk: Serenade for Strings in E flat, op. 6.*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Vaclav Talich.

Supraphon H 23706-9.

Musicianly, if somewhat self-conscious performance of a piece whose charm was taken too seriously by its composer.

*Glazounov: Symphony no. 5 in B flat major.*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Konstantin Ivanov.

Supraphon H 23661-4.

Good balance, extreme *forte* shrill. The conductor responds to orchestral colour and rhythm, but misses tension by inattentiveness to modulations.

*Alexander Moyzes (b. 1872): Slovak Dances, op. 43.*

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Dr. Ludovit Rajter.

Supraphon H 23713-6.

Some good folk (?) tunes, in naive and pretentious, though well orchestrated settings. Sham developments by the ream. Excellent playing and recording. P. H.

*Vivaldi: L'Estro Armonico, op. 3.\**

Pro Musica Orchestra, Stuttgart, c. Rolf Reinhardt.

Vox PL 7423.

Vivaldi's *opus 3* comprises eight *concerti grossi* (in B minor, E minor, D major, D minor, G minor, A major, A minor, F major), and four violin concerti (in G major, D major, A minor and E major). Apart from a few dull moments in the fiddle concerti, *L'Estro Armonico* is a superb anthology, always vital and inspired, and often highly original, both formally and harmonically (e.g. the initiating *Allegro* of the *Concerto grosso* in D minor, and especially this first movement's striking final cadence). The works are extremely well played and very precisely recorded. All the soloists are outstandingly good, but Reinhold Barchet deserves a particular mention for his performances in the violin concerti. Strongly recommended in every musical and technical respect.

\* Strongly recommended.



*Dittersdorf: Symphony in A minor, and*

*Louis Ferdinand of Hohenzollern: Rondo (for piano and orchestra).*

The Frankenland State Symphony Orchestra, c. Erich Kloss; Otto A. Graef (piano).  
Nixa LLP 8026.

The Dittersdorf is ponderous and primitive to an exceptional degree; it is empty of musical content, and one would have to be an enthusiastic historian indeed to take any pleasure in its solemn naivety. Prince Louis' prolonged and protracted Rondo confirms what the dictionaries write about him: that he was an amateur composer of decided gifts. One was more willing to give him credit for his gifts before listening to this unfortunate revelation of his painful amateurishness.

*Copland: The Red Pony (Children's Suite),\** and

*Virgil Thomson: Louisiana Story (Arcadian Songs and Dances).\**

The Little Orchestra Society, c. Thomas Scherman. Brunswick AXTL 1022.

Both these suites are arrangements of first-class film scores. From *Louisiana Story*, Thomson assembled two concert scores; the "Arcadian Songs and Dances" include most of the extraordinarily interesting Cajun folk tunes which were used in the film. This, perhaps, is the Suite's most distinctive feature, and the settings, for the most part, are very well done. (Hans Keller published a detailed study of Thomson's *Louisiana Story* score in *Music Survey*, II/2 and 3, 1949-50.) Copland's *Red Pony* (see also MR, XIII/3, p. 238 [ED.]) is the more ambitious. The quasi-folk tunes are not as good as the originals employed by Thomson; in addition, the Suite is extremely fragmentary, and even its small forms are excessively sequential. Copland's imagination, however, his instrumental ear and sheer vitality, are ample compensations, and, if one is not expecting too much, movements III and IV (*Dream March and Circus Music and Walk to the Bunkhouse*) prove to be highly entertaining and ingenious musical surprises. Nobody need sniff at such breezy skill. The suites are played with enormous, prairie-like zest, and brilliantly recorded.

*J. S. Bach: Ascension Oratorio "Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen" (Cantata no. 11).*

Soloists, the Swabian Choral Singers, and the Stuttgart Bach Orchestra, c. Hans Grischkat. Nixa LLP 8034.

Only a very fair recording of a poor performance. Militant and military rhythms prevail, and all emotion is severely repressed. A wheezing organ and sneezing woodwinds make me suspect that this record treasured the wrong kind of historical authenticity as one of its aims. Of the soloists, Ruth Michaelis (contralto) does her best to phrase and feel despite the asphalt parade-ground atmosphere. The sergeant-major-ish tenor shall remain nameless.

*Haydn: "Seven Last Words of Christ", op. 51. Quartet in F major, op. 3, no. 5.*

*Quartet, op. 103 (Unfinished).*

Amadeus String Quartet.

Nixa WLP 6202.

This is a Nixa pressing of the Westminster set I reviewed unfavourably in MR XIV/2. The English version is no worse than the American original, but it certainly does not represent any improvement. Violent distortions continue to disfigure what is probably a distinguished performance.

*Mozart: Sonata in G major-G minor, K.379, and Sonata in B flat major, K.454.*

Walter Barylli (violin) and Paul Badura-Skoda (piano).

Nixa WLP 5109.

Badura-Skoda is outstanding (e.g. the first (piano) variation in K. 379's second movement), and consistently outshines his colleague whose phrasing, feeling, tone, style and sensitivity are by no means as immaculate. The recording is good.

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\* Strongly recommended.



*Tchaikovsky: Love Duet* (from an unfinished posthumous work completed and orchestrated by Taneiev), and

*Gounod: "Non, ce n'est pas le jour" (Roméo et Juliette, act IV).*

Jean Fenn (soprano) and Raymond Manton (tenor), with Katherine Hilgenberg (contralto) and the Los Angeles Orchestral Society, c. Franz Waxman.

Capitol CTL 7034.

Both these duets are settings of act III, scene 5, of Shakespeare's play. The familiar Gounod need not long detain us, but the Tchaikovsky is of greater interest since there we may enjoy the strange experience of hearing substantial portions of the famous fantasy-overture in vocal dress; and vocally, it must be said, the big tunes go very well. The singing is not up to much, the recording strident, and to Taneiev's introduction to Tchaikovsky's sketches, Mr. Waxman has added the introduction from the fantasy-overture; thus spun out, the piece just runs a full side.

*Moussorgsky: Boris Godunov.*

Boris (Boris Christoff), Pimen (Christoff), Varlaam (Christoff), Feodor (Zareska), Marina (Zareska), The Nurse (Lydia Romanova), Shouisky (André Bielecki), Dimitri (Nicolai Gedda), Rangoni (Kim Borg), Tchelkalov (Kim Borg), etc., Choeurs Russes de Paris, Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, c. Issay Dobrowen.

His Master's Voice ALP 1044-1047.

The most serious objection to this in many ways recommendable set is that we have to listen not to Moussorgsky's opera but to Rimsky-Korsakov's version of it; and Korsakov, as we all know, not only re-orchestrated the original, but thoroughly "revised" it, prettified quite a bit of it (the Coronation scene, for example, quite apart from Korsakov's additions, lacks Moussorgsky's characteristically and deliberately primitive punch), and altered the order of the scenes (or rather stuck to the order Moussorgsky disposed only under considerable pressure). Opinions differ as to the desirability of performing the original, but, from what I remember of the first post-war Covent Garden production (which employed Moussorgsky's own work, not Korsakov's), there is no doubt that the original is far to be preferred; with all its probable faults (and it may well be that Korsakov's amendments improved some of them), it does fully disclose Moussorgsky's singular genius, whereas Korsakov's version tends to disguise the latter and substitute the editor's own. Bearing in mind this basic attitude, I think one may say that this is a compelling account of Korsakov's *Boris*. I have never considered Dobrowen a celebrated *Boris* conductor, simply because he has not concerned himself (to the best of my knowledge) with the original version (he even attempted improvements on Korsakov in recent years at Covent Garden); but he certainly knows his way about the edited score, and directs it with conviction.

An oddity in the casting is the doubling of the rôles of Marina and Feodor by Zareska, and the tripling of the roles of Boris, Pimen and Varlaam by Christoff. In neither case can it be said that the experiment is a success. Zareska is a shining Marina but a poor Feodor, whilst Christoff is an exceptional Boris but can barely avoid Borisizing both Pimen and Varlaam; indeed, the harder he tries to subdue his Tzarship the plainer it becomes that Christoff is singing all three parts. His Varlaam is by no means vernacular enough—it is altogether too splendid and imperial—and his Pimen is all too obviously a conscious effort at a deliberate masquerade. Where Pimen-Christoff confronts Boris-Christoff in Korsakov's (not Moussorgsky's!) last scene (the death of Boris), the idiocy of this casting scheme is exposed: Christoff is obliged to interrupt himself. Christoff's own Boris is a real achievement, but now and again his active creation of his great rôle—his continual self-dramatization—tends to obscure rather than define what should be purely musical issues. Bielecki's Shouisky and Romanova's Nurse are weak characterizations; Gedda's Dimitri is on the slight side vocally, but refreshingly intelligent in musical conception; the chorus is not as full-blooded as it might have been. The recording is most adequate, and the orchestral performance of a high standard. If this is not the *Boris*

that 1953 should have brought us, its many acceptable virtues are welcome; when we are allowed to possess the original *Boris* in addition, this set may develop a particular value. Casting apart, I can hardly imagine a more authentic reading of Korsakov's edition.

D. M.

*Paisiello: Overture—Nina o la pazza d'amore.*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

His Master's Voice DB 6499.

*Beethoven: Coriolan overture, op. 62, and Egmont overture, op. 84.*

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca LW 5015.

*Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus overture, op. 43, and Fidelio overture, op. 72b.*

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca LW 5018.

*Wagner: Tristan and Isolde—prelude to act III.*

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Furtwängler.

His Master's Voice DB 21585.

*Dvořák: Slavonic Dances, nos. 1 in C major, 2 in E minor, 3 in A flat, op. 46, and 16 in A flat, op. 72.*

Hamburg Radio Symphony Orchestra, c. Schmidt-Isserstedt.

Decca LW 5048.

*Elgar: Pomp and Circumstance March no. 3 in C minor, op. 39.\**

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Boult.

His Master's Voice DB 21588.

*Ravel: Valses nobles et sentimentales and Le Tombeau de Couperin.*

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet.

Decca LXT 2821.

*Prokofiev: Scythian Suite, op. 20, and Lieutenant Kije Suite, op. 60.\**

Vienna Symphony Orchestra, c. Scherchen.

Nixa WLP 5091

Apart from the enterprise in giving us something by Paisiello, we can say nothing for this offering of his *Nina* overture. The work itself is like a weak brew of Haydn gone flat with keeping; and the engineers have made a poor job of bottling it. The four Beethoven overtures are very well played indeed and in their handiness as records and quality as reproductions justify the "medium-play" policy. Apart from a pointless *rallentando* immediately before the *allegro con brio* at the close of *Egmont*, all four works show van Beinum and the London Philharmonic Orchestra at their best.

Furtwängler's sensitive approach to the *Tristan* act III prelude gets an overall effect which is absolutely right; but details defeat him. For example, in the shepherd's tune the soloist appears to take no notice at all of the comprehensive playing directions Wagner wrote lovingly into the score. The Schmidt-Isserstedt rendering of four Dvořák dances is sound and exhilarating; we are grateful for the relatively rare item from op. 72.

The dramatic March no. 3 is the least consciously "styled" of the op. 39 pieces; as an essay in orchestral climax building it is unsurpassed anywhere in Elgar's output. Performance and recording are alike superb.

In the two suites, beautifully played by Ansermet and the Swiss orchestra, we have the worst and the best of orchestral Ravel. The *Valses*, originally piano works, sound like sketches in orchestration for *La Valse*, which came seven or eight years later. They are noisy and overblown. *Le Tombeau de Couperin* on the other hand is a set of pure inspirations and is so beautifully played here that we would star the issue were the recording in any way outstanding.

Wearing the distinguished Westminster label, the Prokofiev record has already been reviewed (MR, XIII/4, p. 329). Nothing of its original brilliance is lost in the change-over.

*Mozart: Lucio Silla overture, K. 135.*

London Mozart Players, c. Blech.

His Master's Voice C 4235.

*March in D, K. 249, and German Dance, K. 605, no. 3.\**

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

Columbia LX 1587.

\* Strongly recommended.

Beethoven: *Six Minuets*, and  
Dvořák: *Gavotte*.

London Baroque Orchestra, c. Haas.

Parlophone SW 8149-50.

Schubert: *Ballet music no. 2 in G from Rosamunde*, op. 26.\*

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kletzki.

Columbia LX 1585.

Mendelssohn: *Ruy Blas overture*, op. 95.

BBC Symphony Orchestra, c. Sargent.

His Master's Voice DB 21601.

Humperdinck: *Hansel and Gretel overture*.

BBC Symphony Orchestra, c. Sargent.

His Master's Voice DB 21591.

Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody no. 2*.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Schwarz.

His Master's Voice C 4230.

Barber: *Adagio for strings*.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kletzki.

Columbia LX 1595.

Mozart's Overture to the third of his Milan operas (1770-2) is well played and recorded: it has the serious quality of a little symphony. The Beecham-RPO issue is first-rate in all respects: this *March* and *Dance* are two of Mozart's most richly orchestrated occasional pieces. That one should be an early, and one a very late work and yet each be pure Mozart and of superb craft, is telling evidence of how Mozart had attained full technical mastery in orchestral writing while still a boy.

The Six Beethoven Minuets are those catalogued as piano music in Grove (no. 167), but originally written for orchestra. They are by no means weak compositions and Karl Haas reproduces them beautifully in a well-made record. The Dvořák fill-up is nicely played by the London Baroque Orchestra's string section. Kletzki's *Rosamunde* record is one of the finest Philharmonia performances ever issued on 78s and should on no account be missed. Sargent's *Hansel and Gretel* and *Ruy Blas* have identical virtues in being expansively performed with an uninhibited aim at the spirit of their content. The records have, however, identical faults: both are massive and loud and only first-class gear will reproduce them. Getting on for thirty years ago, Stokowski and the Philadelphia SO made recording history with the first really stunning record made by the new "electrical" system (His Master's Voice D 1296). For anyone interested in orchestral arrangements of Liszt's piano rhapsodies, that performance is a *datum* point; in excitement resource, polish and total effect Schwarz' effort comes nowhere near it. But never has anyone else's, and the present record at least fits the modern gramophone. The Barber work should be heard on Boyd Neel's Decca X 305 for comparison with the present performance, though the Kletzki version gets easily the better recording.

Haydn: *Symphonies no. 44 in E minor and no. 48 in C*.

Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra, c. Wöldike.

Decca LXT 2832.

Haydn: *Symphonies no. 54 in G and no. 70 in D* and

Mozart: *Overture in B flat*, K. 311a.

Chamber Orchestra of Vienna State Academy, c. Swarowsky.

Nixa LLP 8032.

Haydn: *Symphonies no. 96 in D ("Miracle") and no. 97 in C*.\*

Concertgebouw Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca LXT 2847.

Mozart: *Symphonies no. 28 in C*, K. 200 and *no. 29 in A*, K. 201.\*

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Maag.

Decca LXT 2840.

Haydn: *Symphony no. 93 in D* and

Mozart: *Symphony no. 31 in D*, K. 297 ("*Paris*").

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

Columbia 33 CX 1038.

Goldmark: *Rustic Wedding Symphony*, op. 26.\*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

Columbia 33 CX 1067.

\* Strongly recommended.

*Dvořák: Symphony no. 4 in G, op. 88.*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Talich.

Supraphon LPV 44.

*Richard Strauss: Symphony for wind instruments.*

London Baroque Ensemble, c. Haas.

Parlophone PMA 1006.

Except for one each of Haydn and Mozart, none of the above symphonies is in the regular repertoire. If this means that the present high record-production potential is intended to carry with it some regular exploration beyond the few dozen old friends from late Haydn, late Mozart, the Four, the Nine and the Romantics, the recording companies are to be encouraged. Unhappily they cannot be encouraged on a basis of unreserved praise for this lot. The Beecham Haydn-Mozart recording is simply shocking. How Sir Thomas came to let it pass is beyond understanding; especially since he, the same orchestra and the same company produce a superbly recorded performance of Goldmark's work. (I do hope everyone concerned will compare the two: Sir Thomas, if no one else, is capable of telling Columbia not to let this nonsense continue!) The Goldmark is a suite with a first movement of eleven variations on a tune so universal of expression that, on hearing it for the first time, one says "so that's where that comes from". The last movement is a *furioso* which uses the variation theme and matter from an *intermezzo*. This attempt at unity need mislead nobody; nothing can make Goldmark's work into a symphony—and nothing can spoil its charm. It is beautifully played in a fine recording.

Of the remaining Haydn records, van Beinum's of no. 97 and the *Miracle* is easily the pick. Of robust performance, very much in character, these are excellently engineered. In the earlier works, Wölkke's versions of the *Trauersymphonie* (no. 44) and *Maria Theresa* (no. 48) are well performed, but the strings are recorded on the thin and wiry side; Swarowsky's nos. 54 and 70 are most stylishly performed, the Vienna State players providing an accurate "period" atmosphere, probably as a result of using an orchestra of the right size.

The two delightful early Mozart symphonies K. 200-1 are performed superbly by Maag and the Swiss orchestra and Decca achieve a fair recording to provide a collector's piece. Dvořák's G major Symphony brings with it some fine examples of the composer's nationalist melody making. The first two movements are forged by an inspired handling of inspired material; the last two fall flat, in spite of good thematic essence. (Tchaikovsky got away with this precise kind of situation by being more prepared than Dvořák to use the occasional bold thematic stroke which is justified only by its success in covering up symphonic weakness.) The playing is splendid; the recording acceptable.

The Wind Symphony carries a heavy load of nostalgia for the Strauss of the era *Don Juan* to *Rosenkavalier* and was not to be expected from the later composer of *Metamorphosen* and the oboe Concerto. It is best accepted, with its virtuosity, its backward, smiling glances and its essential romance as a final example of how completely integrated was Strauss' art with his life. It is dedicated to Mozart: Mozart would understand why. Performance and recording are of an equal excellence.

*Mozart: Idomeneo: act I. Recit.: "Quando avran fine amai", and Aria: "Padre, Germani, addio!"*

S. Jurinac and Glyndebourne Festival Orchestra, c. Busch.

*Idomeneo: act III. Aria: "Zeffiretti Lusinghieri", and Quartet: "Andro ramingo e soto".*

S. Jurinac, D. McNeil, A. Young and R. Lewis and Glyndebourne Festival Orchestra, c. Busch.

His Master's Voice DB 21527.

*Donizetti: Don Pasquale.*

Complete Opera. M. Luise, S. Colombo, J. Oncina, L. Aymaro, J. Schmiedinger with Vienna Kammerchor and Vienna State Orchestra, c. Quadri.

Nixa WLP 6206.

*Leoncavallo: Pagliacci.*

Complete Opera. Clara Petrella, M. del Monaco, P. di Palma, A. Poli, A. Protti, with Chorus and Orchestra of Academia di St. Cecilia, Rome, c. Erede.

Decca LXT 2845.

*Ravel: L'heure espagnol.†*

Complete Opera. Suzanne Danco, P. Derenne, M. Hamel, H. Rehfuß and A. Vessières, and l'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet.

Decca LXT 2828.

The *Idomeneo* excerpts are very well performed, but the long recitative is poor Mozart and the act III Quartet is not well recorded. A performance of *Don Pasquale*, given a good Norina, stands or falls by the trio and quartets that make up most of the marvellous second act. The "contract" quartet is wonderfully managed, but in the *stretta* the speed is too much for Lina Aymaro. Apart from that she makes an effective minx of Norina. Her lover sings the third act *serenata* well, but, in his duets with Norina, is heard to fall below her very high standards as regards hitting the note. Pasquale himself, and Malatesta, are excellent performances. The recording is good apart from a formidable echo during the first few minutes.

To register as it should, Leoncavallo's masterpiece must be sung, acted, played and staged melodramatically. Passion, jealousy, self-pity and plain bloody-mindedness must all be there, on the boards. This performance has everything, and perhaps a bit too much of some things. But it comes off. Erede handles the orchestra magnificently. The issue is worth buying for the scene in act I between Nedda and Tonio. Poli, singing the latter, gives the best individual performance in the cast. Why Protti (Silvio) is given the prologue instead of Poli is a mystery which provides the only real blemish. Mario del Monaco is a good Canio: this is one of the few operas, surely, that can contain his vocal abandon; and Petrella is the best Nedda we have heard.

*L'heure espagnol* is beautifully done in all departments but falls a little short of the recent Vox issue. Both should be heard and, certainly, one should be bought, for this is an enchanting score and these present riches provide a real embarrassment to reviewer and buyer alike.

*Bach: Fifteen three-part Inventions.\** Lukas Foss.

Brunswick AXTL 1027.

*Scarlatti: Sonatas for harpsichord.\** Fernando Valenti.

Nixa WLP 5106.

*Schubert: Moments musicaux, op. 94, nos. 5 in F minor and 6 in A flat.*

Edwin Fischer.

His Master's Voice DB 21578.

*Four Impromptus, op. 142.\** Clifford Curzon.

Decca LXT 2781.

*Brahms: Rhapsody in G minor, op. 79, no. 2, and Intermezzo in E, op. 116, no. 4.*

Walter Gieseking.

Columbia LX 1586.

This a keyboard miscellany of unusual excellence. The Scarlatti record, twelve exquisitely played sonatas beautifully recorded, was mentioned (and, by an accident, not starred) in the November, 1952, MR when it first appeared with a different label. The transference from American Westminster to Nixa has been carried out with no loss in quality. Lukas Foss gives a Bach performance of the clearest enunciation and Clifford Curzon provides one of the most satisfying Schubert essays on records. The highlights of Curzon's fine playing lie in his ability to bring out the "inner" melodic writing (especially in no. 2) and to integrate keyboard ornaments into the body of the work (especially in no. 3): both these are important aspects of Schubert which lesser pianists either can't handle or fail to understand.

Both Fischer and Gieseking are given to bringing out the poetry from what they play; they are slightly less well recorded than the LP issues, though well worth buying.

\* Strongly recommended.

† see p. 161.



- Schubert: Der Doppelgänger and Am Meer.\** Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore. His Master's Voice DB 21586.  
*Wolf: Der Tambour; Ob der Koran von Weigheit sei, and So lang Man Nuchtern ist.* Hans Hotter and Gerald Moore. Columbia LB 147.

The interpretative singing and piano playing on each of these records could not be improved upon; Hotter's very lovely Wolf performances are accompanied by a rather wooden piano tone, but apart from this, recording in both cases is good. Fischer-Dieskau sings the two finest of Schubert's Heine songs at the top of his bent; the climax in *Der Doppelgänger*, from fear at bar 25 ("who is that man"), to terror at bar 41 ("his face is mine own"), is worked up with superb artistry. He failed to achieve just this in his recently recorded *Erkönig*.

*International Musical Eisteddfod, 1952.*

Recorded by UNESCO, narration by Jack Bornoff.

Nixa WLP 6209.

No doubt, staged in some pretty Welsh valley, with the whole thing moving slowly and intelligibly through a few summer days, and the choice always before one of seeing a bit more, or hearing a bit more, or going off for a walk or a pint or a sleep in between, an Eisteddfod can be attractive. But over two hours of solid, recorded *Eisteddfodder* in cold blood is too much. The records are ungrateful to the musical ear. Items are faded in and out unpleasantly; long musically monotonous dances, sometimes with only the rhythm of drums or feet, and the constant repetition of the same tune, must become wearisome to any but the student of folk dancing. The fact that there is no way whatever of picking out single items chosen from the descriptive matter renders the records—otherwise well enough made—of limited value even to students.

*Corelli: Concerto grosso in G minor, op. 6, no. 8.*

*Torelli: Concerto a quattro in G, op. 8, no. 6.*

*Vivaldi: Violin Concerto in E, op. 8, no. 1 (Pastoral dance only).*

*Scarlatti (D.): Pastorale in G.*

*Boccherini: Quintet in D, op. 12, no. 4 (Pastorale only).*

The Virtuosi de Roma, c. Fasano.

Brunswick AXTL 1032.

*Bach: Brandenburg Concerto no. 2 in F, and Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 in D.*

Philharmonia Orchestra, conductor and pianist, Edwin Fischer.

His Master's Voice ALP 1084.

*Haydn: Cello Concerto in D, op. 101, and*

*Boccherini: Cello Concerto in B.*

Antonio Janigro and Vienna State Opera Orchestra, c. Prohaska.

Nixa WLP 5126

*Mozart: Sinfonia concertante in E flat, K. 364.†*

Joseph and Lilian Fuchs with the Zimble Sinfonietta.

Brunswick AXTL 1018.

*Nielsen: Violin Concerto.*

Menuhin and Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra, c. Wöldike.

His Master's Voice BLP 1025.

*Strauss: Don Quixote, op. 35.*

Fournier and The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Krauss.

Decca LXT 2842.

The Brunswick issue of early Italian music appeared under the label "Christmas Music". The Virtuosi de Roma play in the real chamber orchestra spirit and all their performances are stylish and polished. As to recording, which is not bad, the Corelli Concerto should be compared with the Vox issue (see MR, November, 1953) which is practically perfect. Ornella Santoliquido plays the Scarlatti piece and does well in distinguished company. The performance, by a quintet, of Boccherini's *pastorale* is of such remarkable beauty that the record might be bought for it alone. The Bach record is beyond praise; superb playing by everyone, but especially the *clarino* trumpeter in no. 2

\* Strongly recommended.

† see p. 162.



and the piano in no. 5, are captured on a first-rate recording. Janigro plays the Haydn cello work well, but in Gevaert's "realization", which is not to be preferred to the original version, recently recorded by Reinhardt and the Pro Musica Orchestra on Vox. The Boccherini Concerto is a dullish work, an admissible vehicle for first-rate performance (which it gets here) only because of poverty of the cellist's concert repertoire. Joseph and Lian Fuchs give a thoroughly sound performance of Mozart's double concerto; the recording provides strident string-tone calling for steep top-cutting on an otherwise acceptable record. In this reviewer's opinion, the violin Concerto will never be rated highly amongst Nielsen's major compositions. Here it gets some lovely playing and the recording is of the best. So assured and smooth is Menuhin's handling of his part that one cannot believe he has made the work less interesting than it should be. Fournier plays delightfully in an entirely successful *Don Quixote*. Readers must make their own comparisons with other versions; the work is not all things to all men, and if the present reading is knightly and fantastic rather than pitiful and lunatic, here is one who welcomes it the more.

Schubert: *Quartet in A minor, op. 29*. Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet. Nixa WLP 5115.

Smetana: *Second String Quartet*. Smetana Quartet. Supraphon LPM 74.

Bloch: *String Quartet, no. 3*. Griller Quartet. Decca LM 4558.

Villa-Lobos: *Quatuor for flute, harp, celesta and women's voices, and Nonetto*.

Roger Wagner Chorale with the Concert Arts Ensemble, c. Wagner.

Capitol CTL 7037.

The A minor Quartet is pure essence of Schubert, wearing all its beauties very near the surface. The Vienna players miss none of these in a record on which the violins are not well reproduced.

On the cover of Supraphon's Smetana issue, his second Quartet is said to be in D minor, and on the label in E minor. In fact, this work is the second and last of Smetana's quartets and is in D minor. The fact that the two middle movements are of polka and folk song character notwithstanding, there is more to this late work than its nationalism. As in the first, E minor, Quartet, Smetana said that the work is related to his unhappy life, and in fact the outside movements have a philosophical content of some depth and inspired invention. The playing is fine and the recording reasonable. Bloch's third Quartet is a work of our time, sophisticated and with a wide sweep unfettered by any militant Jewish feeling but all the same in the composer's unmistakable idiom. This may rapidly become the most approachable, and most enjoyed, of his chamber compositions. A sincere work, beautifully played.

Both the Villa-Lobos pieces use concerted voices singing a single line as members of a chamber ensemble. The *Nonetto* includes the same instruments as the Ravel Septet, which it brings to mind both in the tunes and the organization of its content. The *Quatuor* ends with a magnificent samba, the eight-in-a-bar rhythm provided by men's voices being wonderfully managed on the record. These are two pieces very characteristic of the Brazilian composer's art; and if that art is essentially simple and direct, the fact remains that no European composer writing to-day, with racial or national feeling, has anything more fresh and enlivening to say.

J. B.

## Correspondence

30, Herne Hill,  
London, S.E.24.  
11th March, 1954.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

SIR,—Richard Gorer's (Marble) arch comments on our Britten symposium show the defects of my style by omitting the central sentence of the passage they criticize, and misprinting the central verb of the rest. Just as convincingly, he demonstrates "the fault of logic inherent in [a] whole argument" which I never submitted. In fact, if our book is as bad as he thinks, an unfavourable review rather than a bad view would seem to be required.

Yours faithfully,  
HANS KELLER.

Johannesgasse 20,  
Vienna I, Austria.  
27th March, 1954.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—I find it in very questionable taste that Mr. Richard Gorer should quote an obvious misprint to show that Hans Keller cannot write English. I suppose, however, that not much more can be expected from a reviewer who says: "The analytical essays are all more or less competent and can be recommended to those who wish to know about the composer's work without actually going to the trouble of hearing it".

The Britten book contains many good and equally many bad points: this is almost a *sine qua non* of any such anthology, and I am sure that the editors are fully aware of this deficiency. Apparently, however, this is not the time, and Mr. Richard Gorer is not the man, to decide about the relative merits of Britten and the recent Britten book.

Yours faithfully,  
H. C. ROBBINS LONDON.

[The misprint to which our correspondents draw attention—and for which we sincerely apologize—is attributable to THE MUSIC REVIEW and is not a quotation from the Britten symposium. The sting in Mr. Robbins Landon's letter is thus peremptorily drawn. Mr. Keller, we feel, would do well to turn to *Hamlet*, act III/scene 2, and ponder the Queen's comment on the play within the play (Ed.).]

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